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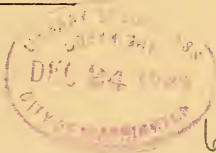
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Clinton Locke

FIVE MINUTE TALKS

BY THE

REV. CLINTON LOCKE, D. D.,

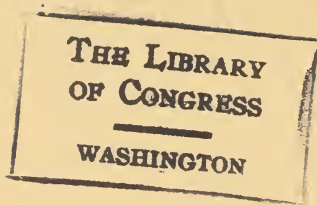
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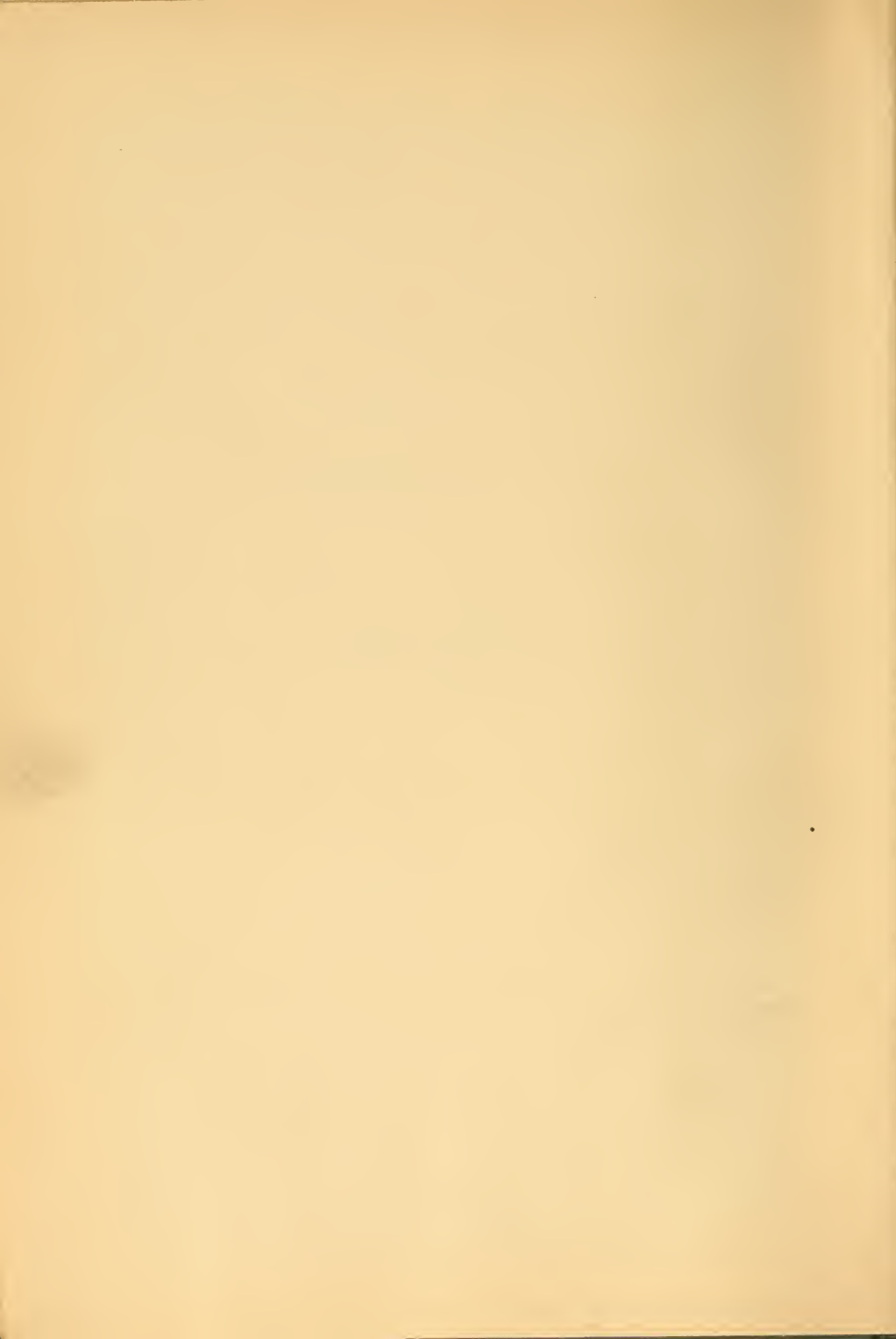
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TO MY
VERY BEST EARTHLY FRIEND,
MY WIFE.



PREFACE.

THE author of these short papers did not think them worthy of a longer life than that of the weekly journal (*The Living Church*) in which they first appeared; but the judgment of people to whom he ought to defer, and the urgent letters from many strangers decided him to put them in this little book. They are not very deep, nor are they very wise, but they give answers to many questions which present themselves to many people. He hopes they may meet with the approval of his fellow Churchmen, and that they may do some little good.

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FIVE MINUTE TALKS.

THE MEANING OF ADVENT.

WE are now to begin again the Church Year and to tell off that lovely rosary, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascension, Whitsuntide, Trinity, and all the fasts and festivals which the wise Church arranged long, long ago for our education. No matter what vagaries or views I or any other priest may hold about Advent or Easter, we are forced to read to the people the Scripture Lessons, and pray the appointed prayers which teach the Church doctrine about them. I cannot, if I am an honest man, stand up and preach from the pulpit that there is no final judgment, and then come back to the altar and pray that "in the last day when Christ shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal." This is a protection no religious body outside the Catholic Church gives its people. Any preacher can harp for a dozen Sundays on the theme, for example, of no individual resurrection, and he can arrange his

prayers and cook up his Scripture Lessons, and pick out his hymns, so that nothing would appear on the contrary side; but the clergy of the Church must say: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," "Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers," "After this life may attain everlasting joy and felicity."

Advent is so called from a Latin word, *advenio*, "I come back," and is founded on the express words of Holy Scripture, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," and its object is to keep that Coming before the mind. The Church Year did not always begin at Advent. For a long time it began at Christmas, and in the Church of England until 1752, it formally began on Annunciation Day, a very appropriate time; but for many centuries Advent has been the real starting point, and surely there could be no better time than just before Christmas to begin the sacred drama of the Life and Death and Rising of our Lord.

You will however take a very narrow view of Advent, if you confine it to thoughts of our Lord's second Coming. His first Coming, and the world to which He came, must be just as prominent in our minds. He comes whenever there is a crisis in your life which brings Him more clearly before you. He comes in Baptism and the Eucharist. He comes in a very vivid way at death, and He comes to the whole Church in great events, like the fall of Jeru-

saalem for example, which in the New Testament is so dwelt upon as one of His Comings, that cursory readers of the Bible mix up what is said about it with His last great Coming. Still the Coming to judgment is the great Advent thought, and if there be one thing more foolish than another, it is trying to find out when that Coming will be. The Bible tells expressly that no one but God the Father knows that. How then can you find it out since He reveals it nowhere? But it is amazing how from the very first, Christian people have thought they could guess it. Even the Apostles, as we can see from their Epistles, thought it would come very soon; and in the Middle Ages, once or twice a date was fixed, and while it sobered many and brought them to penitence, it hardened many more, who plunged in all profligacy, saying they would be damned any way, and meant to have a good time while the world lasted. A day was set some thirty or forty years ago by a sect of religionists, and many people made themselves white gowns to go to heaven in, and sat shivering all night on hill tops, thinking, poor deluded souls, that the second Advent would take place that night.

As far as I can see, the world is nowhere near its end. The great body of the Moslems are yet to be brought to a true faith, and the vast company of pagans to be told of Christ; the tremendous battle between good and evil to be fought to a finish; liberty and light to rise over our lands now sunk in political and moral darkness, and fair and just phase, and do not confuse realities with metaphors.

laws everywhere to prevail; but what do I know about it? How can I tell how long or how short a time may be needed to get ready the "fulness of time," before which certainly our Lord will not come? Think how suddenly and unexpectedly changes come now upon the world, not only from physical causes, like earthquakes, fires, pestilences, but from political causes. See, how by a flash of lightning, the whole question of China and Japan and naval warfare changed, and then stop saying that the world cannot be near her end, because there is so much to get ready for it. God can work very quickly. Do not waste your time on the millennium. It is an obscure, fanciful subject, about which reams of nonsense have been written, but which is of no practical importance, and I give the same advice about the place where the judgment is to be. Who knows and who cares whether it is to be the valley of Jehoshaphat or on Cape Cod? Everything in Scripture points to its being in space, and not on the earth at all.

Christ's second Coming does not mean that He returns here to our level, but that we will be given in our new bodies those faculties by which we can realize His Presence, a Presence which has never left us. He is here, but He comes to us, when with risen eyes we can see Him here. Then again, do not think that by the judgment day is meant exactly twenty-four hours in which the whole awful transaction will begin and end. Day in Scripture, constantly means a time, a period, a The blowing of trumpets, the chariots and horse-

men, the thunders, the signs in sun and moon, and the stars falling, are all vivid touches in an awful picture which is meant to convey to us deep and piercing convictions of the importance, the dread, the solemnity, of the last judgment.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE THOUGHTS.

A GOOD Advent theme is the "Judgment of the Thoughts." Let us consider it. It seems very terrible to have your thoughts judged. I can very well understand that I should have to answer for my deeds, even human law requires that strictly of me; and that my words should be brought to judgment seems right and fair, for my tongue has done more mischief than my hands, and words are really deeds; but that the thoughts of my heart, which have never come outside, which I would not tell to a living soul, that these should be paraded and I called to account for them, seems very overwhelming. Let us first of all remove a very common error on this subject. When I say your thoughts will be judged, I do not mean that unending procession which goes trooping through your heart, waking and sleeping, for dreams show that sleep does not shut off the unending march. We cannot help that stream. It is, to a great degree, independent of our will, and to my mind, is one of the greatest proofs of spiritual influences all around us.

Our Blessed Lord, since He was a man, could not help being exposed to this class of thoughts. He could not avoid having those thoughts of tempting God, of bowing down to earthly power, of wrongly satisfying hunger, which are recorded in the Bible. Their passing through His mind was no sin in Him, and it is no sin in us. Men can no more help this, than the clear lake can help the darkening of its water by the black clouds passing over it. They pass and they do not stain the water; so with the great crowd of floating thoughts. Sometimes they occur so curiously and at such unlooked-for times, that you can only think of them as arrows shot into the heart by the enemy of souls. For example, you will be kneeling at the altar, anxious to realize as vividly as you can your Lord's Presence, when some wicked thought will flash into your mind. You hasten to drive it out, but it has troubled and tried you. Do not worry over the idea that you will be judged for such thoughts as those. You are no more responsible for them than a man gazing from a window is responsible for the rogues, and harlots, and drunkards who troop by in the passing crowd. But making allowances for all that, you know very well that you catch certain of these passing thoughts by the arm and say: "Hold on, I want to talk to you, and have your company." Just there your accountability commences and your judgment begins. You know very well that there are certain trains of thought which you welcome, which you entertain, which you love to have with

you, and while they may be thoroughly demoralizing, thoroughly corrupt, yet you let them run all over you, you shut them up in your heart.

These are the thoughts which will be brought to judgment. These will enter into the account of your life. Human cognizance reaches not to such things, and therefore human judgment is so imperfect, but God's judgment is perfect, and it must notice them. Let me show you why. A man sits at home and broods over a murder. He hates some one so badly that he wants to kill him. He plans just how he can do it. He goes over all the details in his heart, meeting his victim perhaps with a smile. He watches and waits for an opportunity to strike the blow. He never gets a chance and has to give up the scheme. No one in the world knows a word about it, but God knows, and He would not be a just God if He did not call that man to account for his sin, which want of opportunity alone prevented from coming out.

A good man may fall victim to a great temptation to impurity. It is known, and the world judges him and condemns him, rightly enough; but is he any more guilty than his severest critic, perhaps, who has been plotting the ruin of some innocent girl, concealing from her even a suspicion of his intention, doubling and turning in the dark, with no eye on him but God's; and when some unforeseen accident makes him give up his plan, he wipes his mouth and smiles to think that no one is the wiser and no harm done. God does not think so. He could not be just and think so. He must take into

account the motive, the actuating principle, the leading thoughts, for they are, after all, the real basis of action, from them the outer life flows and on them it rests. If only the outer life is to be judged, judgment is a sham; for I know so much veiled hypocrisy, so much hidden evil, so much unknown sin, and I take comfort in a time when it must all come out and some very smooth people stand more deeply condemned than some much-blamed sinners, for it will be seen that at heart and in thought they were far guiltier.

Let me guard you here against a dangerous sophistry. The devil will often whisper to you: "You have thought this all out, and God judges the heart, and He has condemned you for it, and you might as well do it and get some good out of it. It will not be much worse." Nothing could be more false. Evil coming out defiles more than one soul; while it is buried within you, it can harm only you. It is bad enough to have thought, to have planned, to have imagined a sin, but it is ten times worse to have done it, to have carried out the plan, to have made the imagination a reality. Do you ever think that bad thoughts crowd out good ones, and must be judged for that? Two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time. If you, a man, load your mind up with thought of money making and gain, and personal advantage, how can unselfish thoughts crowd in, and thoughts about others, generous thoughts, thoughts of God? Or if you, a woman, fill up your heart with thoughts of dress, and parties, and admiration,

and housekeeping, how can the life of Jesus get a hearing, or a better life a standing place? We do not go deep enough in our probing, we just polish off the outside.

Let our prayer now be, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORD.

WE have talked of the Judgment of the Thoughts; let us now turn to the Judgment of Words. There is a story that Faust, the inventor of printing, when his mind was full of the wonderful change his discovery would work, had a dream in which there appeared to him all the horrible sins which the printing press would disseminate—lies, impurity, infidelity—and he felt almost inclined to keep his invention a secret from the world forever. Sometimes when one looks upon a child and thinks of all the ugly words that will during a lifetime come out of its mouth, one thinks that dumbness, after all, might not be such a curse. But this is rather sentimental, let us come to something really serious.

Our Lord uses these terrible words: "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." You must not take this text alone in thinking of the judgment. In another Gospel we are told that our

deeds will be the point on which the judgment will turn, and in another, that our salvation hangs on our believing and being baptized. We must put all these declarations together, and we get the doctrine that words and deeds and thoughts and obedience and faith are all to be brought up in the day of judgment, and each one to put in a plea.

When our Lord says that for every idle word we will have to give account, what does He mean? Does He mean that all our words must be directly holy and our conversation only of heaven, hell, eternity, justification, the state of our souls, and the Church? A great many people have thought so and taught so, but nothing could be more false, or more canting, or more tiresome. I never dreaded any parish calls so much as those on the people who thought they must talk nothing but religion to the minister. Nothing in the world can lead more directly to hypocrisy and unreality, than such a course. The greatest saint the world ever saw must of necessity have talked much of everyday things. St. Elizabeth was doubtless not above discussing with her cook the best recipe for sausages, and St. Philip Neri could talk chess by the hour. Just as insufferable as that judge would be who never opened his mouth but to speak of rulings and exceptions, would be that Christian who was forever preaching, admonishing, comforting, or expounding. There is a time for all things, and while our words must never be irreligious, impure, or unreal, God does not expect of us that they shall

always be sublime and elevated. He knows they will be often trifling.

But beyond all the necessary talk about our business, and the arrangement of our families and our social relations, there are a thousand topics freely open to the Christian's lips. Why should not a Christian be witty and funny in the right place? Why shouldn't he tell a good story, light as air, perhaps—what harm, if it be pure air? Why should he not discuss politics, art, all the questions of the hour? Pay no heed to that canting talk, "How can a woman with an immortal soul talk about clothes?" Of course she can, and she can talk a long while about them without its doing her immortal soul one particle of harm. She can talk too much about them, but for that matter, so she can about the Church. But our neighbors—certainly we will be condemned if we talk about them? Yes, if you talk about them slanderously and censoriously and with detraction; but come, now, stop canting, and tell me how people can live together without talking about each other in some way? It is impossible, and God does not expect of us impossibilities. Not only can a Christian talk freely about a thousand things called worldly, but it is his duty to try and talk well. A saint is all the better for adding to his saintliness the grace of bright, warm, agreeable conversational powers. No such words will appear to our condemnation. They are like the flowing of the blood, part of the necessity of life.

What, then, does our Lord mean by saying that for every idle word we speak we must give account? It is easy to answer. Idle words mean profane words, envious words, slanderous words, mocking words, ugly words, impure words, unkind words, false words, distrustful words, deceitful words, painful words, stinging words, bitter words, and foolish words. Can any one reading this catalogue say: "My withers are unwrung?" Every one is guilty of some of this idle talk, and guilty every day, and there is no sin so common. Any quantity of idle words are heard in the pulpit, in the drawing room, in literature, and, above all, crying aloud in the newspaper. I can control my eyes, my hands, and my feet; but my tongue, my unruly tongue, how often it slips its leash! How, when we think we have chained it down, it gnaws through the links, and before we know it is "running amuck," striking right and left, and leaving scars which shall bleed for many years.

Words are so easy to speak. Open your mouth and out they come in troops, but not troops of doves often, just flocks of carrion crows. And remember they do not fly away into space and disappear forever. They fly into the memory of God and are there waiting the account. There, man, is the profane oath which left your lips, not once, nor twice, but a dozen times a day. There, woman, is your slanderous innuendo, which you know had no foundation in the truth. There, boy, is the disobedient, the defiant, the impure talk which is daily corrupting your heart. There are the lies, the half

lies, the shaded lies, the black lies, all of them in the lifetime, crying: "Here I am, you have forgotten me, account for me."

Is not this enough to shake the stoutest heart? What can any of us do but pray Him who is all love to accept our poor repentance and our faint struggle, and at the judgment to throw over this festering mass of idle words the mantle of His divine charity?

THE JUDGMENT OF THE DEEDS.

I N the xxv. chapter of St. Matthew there is painted a description of the Last Judgment, so drawn out in detail, so carefully sketched, that it has many times been transferred to canvas, and even now glows with majesty and terror on the altar wall of the Sistine chapel in Rome, the master work of Michael Angelo. As I have said before, no one description of the Judgment in the Gospels is exhaustive. The parables of the wise and foolish virgins and of the talents, and the texts commented on in the last two papers, show other grounds than those stated in this chapter on which Christians will be judged; but this one refers so pointedly to our deeds, that I must make it the basis of what I have to say. I have no doubt that those Catholic theologians are in the right who consider this account of the Judgment as referring to the judgment of that great multitude who, though holding false beliefs and environed by and educated in heathen or other superstitions, have endeavored to live unselfish and true lives. Those who have been on principle merciful, will be saved,

not by their good works, or by their sect, but by the intercession of Christ. They did not know whom they were befriending, but it was Christ.

Do not let us forget that every human being belongs to Christ, and no matter how saved, is saved by Him; and we are only lost by throwing off and destroying our true manhood, which is the likeness of God. But while this is so, and the test of good works may be the only test applied to the mixed multitude, neither Jewish nor Christian, it is also undeniably true that among the tests applied to us, this one of good works must stand out very prominent. These works will bless or curse us; and not only these, but all our deeds, every action, whether secret or open, whether great or small. This our conscience tells us. This needs no text of Scripture and requires no elaborate argument. You may struggle as much as you please, and shut out all unpleasant thoughts from every avenue of entrance; no soul can always shake off the feeling of accountability, and every now and then the solemn words will re-echo through the heart: "By thy deeds thou art justified, by thy deeds thou art condemned." We know that we will have to account for the deed we have just done, no matter how deep we bury it and how few know it. God knows, and God remembers. But we will confine ourselves in this paper to the judgment of our works of mercy.

Six acts of mercy are enumerated in this chapter of St. Matthew, by which all will be tried. I. Feeding the hungry. II. Giving drink to the thirsty. III. Receiving the stranger. IV. Cloth-

ing the naked. V. Visiting the sick. VI. Relieving the prisoners.

It may be said that none of these are peculiarly Christian acts, but I challenge you to produce any extended, concerted work, covering these points, which is not carried on by people who fear God and keep His commandments. Show me a man who is truly and heartily devoted to the cause of sick and suffering humanity, and I will show you that he is very near the kingdom of God, and cannot be an atheist or a constant and unprincipled sinner. Look over your own city, and you will find that the charities are organized and carried on by the followers of Jesus Christ, whose hearts have been touched by the feeling of His love, and who believe it will be asked them at the judgment: "What deeds of charity did you do?" It is such a true and practical way of showing your Christianity. Some of you seem to think that "Good Lord, deliver us," said unctuously as you lean over your comfortable pew in church, will answer the purpose; but at the judgment you will require a Christianity which emptied your pocket, which sent you out from a warm fire-side to see that a cold hearth was warmed by your generosity, which kept you all night at a sick man's bedside, which opened your door to the houseless wanderer, which supplied with unstinted hand all the material necessary for the asylums of Christian charity.

Now I want you to notice that our Lord will say at the judgment of these things, that when

they were done, they were done personally to Him, and that conscientious people will answer: "That cannot be, for we never saw Thee." He will reply: "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me." Is not that a wonderful, blessed, unexpected reply? Think of it. Every good deed that we do to the meanest soul on earth our Lord Christ says is exactly the same as if we did it to Him, standing in person before us.

An army doctor told me that once in a military hospital, some frightful cases were brought in a day or two after a battle, men whose wounds had been long neglected, swarming with vermin, and perfectly putrid. He said to the Sisters in charge: "These men are not fit for you to touch, let the orderlies attend to them." The Superior looked at him with her calm eyes, and said: "Doctor, I do not see those dreadful wounds, I just see my Lord Jesus Christ standing there before me and stretching out His arms for aid." Let us try also to realize that the tenant of the hospital is Jesus lying there, the cold and hungry wanderer Christ, who had not where to lay His head. He will not forget one thing you do for Him. It is said in express words that He will remember even every cup of cold water given in His name.

Do not delude yourself with the idea that if you have faith, works do not help save you. It is a horrible, soul-destroying error. I wish I could pass over the awful condemnation of those who are cast away to punishment, not for acts

of cruelty and lust, dishonesty or evil speaking, but simply for sins of omission. Lazarus in some form had lain at their gates, and they had not helped him. They had simply led selfish lives, and for that, and that alone, must they hear the awful words: "Depart from Me, ye cursed."

Lord have mercy on us!

Christ have mercy on us!

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

THIS is Christmas time, let us talk about Christmas presents. They are varied enough and cheap enough, and the crowds in the streets and the splendid shop windows show that they find a ready sale. Your own homes have re-echoed with the joy brought out by unexpected and welcome gifts, and may I hope that something of your joy has been sent down to homes where, without your help, the Christmas spirit, which we call Santa Claus, and the Germans, so much more beautifully, the Christ-child, could scarcely enter. If no gift from you has found its way into any humble room this Christmas, do not lie down to sleep before you have dispatched it; and if you can carry it yourself, it makes it so much more welcome, for then you can add to it the kindling eye of sympathy and the warm grasp of brotherly feeling. There must be somewhere in your ken a Bob Cratchit, or a Tiny Tim, who will be gladder of the day for seeing you.

But I want to ask you whether you have given anything to the Child who lay in the manger; and that is the point of this paper, the Christmas

presents that His people should make the Saviour of the world. You may say that the Master of all the worlds needs nothing at my hands. He has everything, what can I give Him that would benefit Him? Now you do not talk that way about earthly Christmas presents. You do not ask about the absolute need. You say: "I want to show my love and friendship, therefore I give this gift." It proves to a person that you have him in your mind.

It is true that God has everything, but just as you or I would value something our little children gave us bought with our own money, but given with heartfelt love, so does our Lord Christ value the gifts we give Him, furnished by the very powers He has Himself bestowed. Remember that God, like ourselves, looks not at the costliness of the gift, but the heart of the giver. A man once gave me a costly present of books at Christmas, and I heard that he said, when he bought them: "I have got to do this, though I don't feel like it." Do you suppose I value those books? No, I hate them, and never have opened one volume. On the other hand, a poor woman once sent me a wretched, tasteless piece of worsted work, which looked very dingy and out of place among the presents which lay around it; and yet to me it was the most prized, because I knew that she had given me the thing on which she had spent the most time and which she thought a work of great art.

Let me tell you some things your dear Lord would be glad to receive from you at Christmas in

memory of His birth. I do not say that all of you could give all, but God does not expect all to give Him the same gifts any more than we do. We would not like to have twenty silver pitchers of exactly the same pattern sent to us for Christmas presents at once. It is the beautiful variety, the boundless diversity of gifts from every human being so differently endowed from every other human being, in which God delights. One man may give God a hospital, a church, a college, and another man may give Him the sweeping of a room, the carrying of a message, the winding of a Christmas wreath; but all these joined together make up the splendid roll of gifts from man to God, which the blessed One condescends to receive and cherish.

I will begin with the lowest gift; I mean by that the one that tells the least upon character, and that is—money. Now, as I heard a fine preacher say the other Sunday, God could, if He had chosen, have sent down out of heaven into every hamlet of the world a parish church, all prepared for service, and every month He could rain down in some set place dollars enough to pay all the salaries and expenses of all the institutions of charity; but He chose another plan for our own good and to teach us unselfishness. He has put that responsibility on us, and He has said in plain words: "Whatever you do in that way, I, the Lord, will consider it a personal gift to Me." Have you, like the wise men of old, brought any gold to Christ this Christmas-tide, or have you given that worn out excuse, "hard times?" I hear so much about that, and

then I go into society and see the ladies in their costly clothes, and sit down to some most expensive repast, and it is evident economy has not touched this part of life. It generally begins at the church. A woman said to me: "I feel so badly, our income is so reduced that we will have to give up our pew." I replied in my blunt way: "Why not give up first your theatre tickets?"

Or again, can you not make your Lord a Christmas present of some wrong thing in your daily life, which you dally and play with and feel you ought to part with for your soul's good? A man told me the sweetest Christmas present he ever had, was a little soiled note from his son, couched in those dear awkward characters fathers and mothers know so well, and which read: "Dear papa, my Christmas present to you is a for sure promise not to say one more naughty word."

Give God something in that spirit. Or again, can you not give the Babe of Bethlehem now the gift of personal service? Can you not offer Him any power of your mind which used in His service may help people to know Him better? Can you not give Him a heart of love and faith, or the example of a consecrated life? There is no Christmas gift that would please your Lord like that. He, like all kings, prizes most highly, loyal service. Think over these gifts, money, wrong-doing, personal service. All of you can give the two last, and most of you can give some of the first to Him who gave you all things.

NEW YEAR'S CASTLES.

NEW Year's is a great time for that delightful amusement, building castles in the air. Of course any one who spends all his time at that kind of architecture, will soon lower the tone of his mind and become a dreamer, walking amid shadows and battling with unrealities; but no one can help now and then piling up those cloudy towers, to be dispelled in a moment by the rough wind of daily cares.

But I am not going to talk about impossible castles. I want to bring before you a fair and stately building, which it is perfectly feasible to put into real life, and build upon these shores of Time. What a very fine one you planned last New Year, and where is it now? There is a bit of ruined wall, a half enclosed chamber, a crumbling foundation, and that is all that remains, in many cases, to show for that noble House of Life which was so carefully drawn out a year ago. Oh, these ruined castles of the years gone by! There is no picturesqueness about them like those along the

historic Rhine, where ivy mantles the walls and time has harmonized all things into sweet accord. They are more like castles which have just been stormed, ugly, gaping rents where the bombs exploded, blackened rafters where the fire fiercely raged, mournful, ghastly places, which force tears from the most unwilling eyes, and speak of nothing save desolation, and wretchedness, and ruin.

But what of that? Need that stop us from building any more? Because our last year's plan failed, shall we make none for the year to come? Would that be like buoyant Americans who are never daunted by one rebuff, but gather up their forces to make another trial? Would it be like men, brave men, who have will and reason left? Would it be like an immortal soul which can aspire to a mansion in the world to come? Do you do anything like that with your worldly plans? When the house burns down, up goes a better one; when the business fails, we start afresh. We proudly boast that as a nation, we know no such word as "fail." Let us carry out that maxim in the affairs of the soul, and build a castle which we will struggle to turn from air into a reality. Come and let us plan it together, map out its foundations, draw its towers to a scale, and then go to work to put it into heart and life; for what good are mere castles in the air, no matter how correctly they may be constructed? Can any one live in them? Can they keep out any enemy? Are they any better than mere clouds, taking a thousand shapes as the wind moves them? Fra Angelico

used to kneel down and pray before he painted. Suppose you kneel down and pray before you plan; pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Plan the business part of it. Resolve that it shall be characterized by high and unswerving honor. There shall be in it no chicanery; no undue vaunting of inferior goods; no sacrifice of purpose to gain an unscrupulous customer; no forcing dependent clerks to make statements they know to be untrue; no sharp practice; no taking advantage of the work; but that everything shall be fair and above board, free from pettiness, conceived and carried on in what I consider to be the true Western manner, in a large-handed and large-hearted spirit, scorning a narrow penuriousness and ever ready to assume its share in promoting the public good.

Plan the social part of it. If you are a young woman, resolve that the year shall not be one of lounging on sofas with the last idle novel, a year of empty talk and silly trifling; but that you will be of some good to some one, that you will try to study something, help some neglected family, care for some wandering child. Resolve that your talk at least shall be bright, and that you will know something, no matter what, if it will keep you from utter vacuousness. Thank God, there is a great improvement in young women in this respect.

If you are an older woman, resolve that you will not bedizen yourself with finery which everybody knows your husband cannot afford, and

the purchase of which must keep somebody out of his money. Resolve that your house shall be the scene of prudent management, calm endurance of domestic worry, of blessed home happiness and sweet content, a centre which draws the husband, a sacred school room, where children shall learn from mother's lips those lessons which sink deeper than all others.

If you are a young man, resolve that your castle shall be at least the abode of purity. Shun from this day all those places which, as the Scripture says, lead down to hell; break with all evil companions as ruthlessly as you would part company with snakes; above all, seek the society of pure, good women, for nothing will keep you out of mischief like that.

If you are an older man, resolve to place your life on a high and noble basis. Let this year see you more exemplary in your life, kind to all around you, your lips free from profanity and lewdness, your hands free from corruption, your heart free from malice, and your bearing the reflection of what you are, a son of God.

But our castle is not yet complete. Let us plan the religious part of it. Resolve that it shall be a year of prayer, regular, daily, humble prayer. Resolve that it shall be a year when your Bible shall become a book whose inside shall be as familiar to you as its outside. Resolve that the public services of the sanctuary shall be your delight, and your never omitted duty. Resolve that you will never turn away from your Saviour

present in the gifts of bread and wine; and if you have not that privilege, resolve that in penitence of faith you will qualify yourself for it. And now the castle in the air is perfect. There are its glittering pinnacles, its halls, its presence chamber, its moat, its drawbridge; but remember, it is only in the air, not one stone of it yet laid. To work, then, hew out your material, chisel it into shape, build it up. Christ and all good angels help you. All good men are praying for you. Courage, forward, not a moment is to be lost.

THE TORCHLIGHT OF EPIPHANY.

WHAT a glorious chapter that one of Isaiah, the sixtieth, is, which we read at Epiphany, and how of all its words ring out these: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!" The light of the Gospel, the fiery cross of salvation! Kindled in Palestine, it flew like wild fire along the blue Ægean, and through the lovely cities of Asia Minor. The messengers that passed swiftly along the Appian Way carried it to imperial Rome, and the seven-hilled city from her thousand avenues radiated it over the world. The dusky Egyptians embraced it with all the fervency of their torrid nature, and the streets of Alexandria resounded with hymns to Christ. All along the coast of Africa the watch-fires of Christ were kindled. From Italy it spread to France, to sunny Spain, to the blue-eyed and fair-haired Saxons; over to England went the glittering torch, to Scotland, across the stormy channel to Ireland, and dancing over the waters in the frail boats to Iceland. Then to Russia and to Poland came the glorious news, and those vast

and savage tribes bowed the knee to Jesus. Then the new world was opened to the wondering gaze of men, and with the first galley came the Cross of Christ, the light spreading and spreading until every idol had been cast to the moles and the bats. Then hither it came to this fair land of ours, not brought first, as the Puritans do vainly talk, in the Mayflower to Plymouth Rock, but brought first by good Churchmen from an English port, and echoed in the Church's words on the shores of Maine. Thence it illumined this land, and we have caught up the torch and sent it over the far Pacific to China and Japan, to India. Yes, wherever the foot of man treads, the Cross of Christ goes with him, and the story of the Gospel treads fast upon the heels of the first discoverer.

How this realizes the words of the prophet in the Epiphany chapter: "Lift up thine eyes round about and see. All they gather themselves together. They come to thee. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself." Yes, not to this or that man, not to man in this or that phase of progress, age of the world, or stage of civilization, does this Gospel address itself; but to the common humanity which belongs to all, to the wants, and sorrows, and inward consciousness, which belong to man as man, be he philosopher or fool, king or slave, Eastern or Western, "pagan suckled in a creed outworn," or American with the new lights and wonderful discoveries of the nineteenth century. This is the reason of its universal adaptation to mankind. Other faiths

have geographical limits and live in certain environments; this overleaps them all, and takes hold of the Hindoo, the Japanese, as well as the Norwegian and the New Englander.

I have not the time to show how the Gospel is adapted to all classes; to the poor to console for the inequalities of this world; to the rich, in teaching unselfishness and generosity; to the ignorant, in giving a few simple truths, which he that runs may read; to the learned, in furnishing problems which such intellects as those of Augustine, Aquinas, Butler, Newman, have labored at and not yet solved. The souls of average men can be filled to fulness with the simple thought, Christ, the Redeemer of the poor, the Key of heaven; and the souls of the gifted can be filled to equal fulness with the thought of Christ, the Architect, the Sculptor, the great and matchless Designer, as well as the Comforter of His people.

Let us take humanity at its two extremes, the beginning and the end, and show how the teachings of Christ exactly meet the need. Take a child. You want to make out of it a good and useful man or woman. If you search all the creeds of all the ages, Hindoo, Assyrian, Roman, Norse, can you find any rule or any code that will serve your purpose like the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount? Is there any life of Jupiter or Odin, or Mercury or Brahma, which will serve as a model like that of Jesus of Bethlehem, over whom hung the star of glory? Do you want to teach him gentleness? It is here. Purity? Here is its very

incarnation. Noble views of humanity? Here is the first teacher of an universal brotherhood. Self-sacrifice? Here is the picture of a Cross. You may invent some new machine which will fill every workman with delight, but you can never invent any better way of training a boy than the teaching him to keep his baptismal vows.

Or, take an old man, done with active life, aware of all its hollowness, its disappointments, its broken promises, and its swift coming end; has anything been devised in all this devising more fitted to comfort him than the sweet, calm radiance of the Star, which is Christ, lighting up the pathway to the grave, pointing to rest and peace, gilding the way beyond death, and leading up to glory?

In our hands now the torch of Christ is placed. Let us carry it steadily and hand it on firmly. We spend too much time in quarreling how it is made, or whether we have the right one; we do not seem to care enough how it burns and what light it gives. The fuel that feeds the flame is our love, our faith, our courage, our character. Pour in such oil as that, and brighter and brighter will the torch flame out over the sea of life, lighting all tempest-tossed ships into the haven of the Star.

THE TRAINING OF BOYS AND GIRLS.

I REMEMBER, many years ago, when I first came to the diocese of Chicago a young man with a sense of very superior knowledge, which happily has long since been knocked out of me, that Bishop Whitehouse asked me to preach a sermon at the convention. I took for my topic, "The Education of Children," a subject with which I was, of course, at the age of twenty-four and unmarried, entirely unfamiliar. I have had a good deal of fun with that sermon since, and all the hard and fast rules which it laid down for the guidance of parents. I know a little more about the subject now, and realize what an awful responsibility is this training of a body and soul, to take a place in human life and transmit the training.

What a wonderful thing it would be if we could have a model nation, just as there are model breeds of horses, where unceasing care and keen intelligence had been devoted for a century or two to eliminating everything that was bad, and encouraging all that was good! Children from their birth subjected to the most perfect rules of hygiene,

trained to undergo extremes, hardy, capable, making the most of this beautiful engine, the human body, their minds presented only with the best lessons, all past examples of successful evil kept from them, their spiritual nature fired by the constant presentation of the loveliness, the manliness, the womanliness, the majesty, the power of our dear Master, and trained perfectly in His school, the Holy Catholic Church.

One of these days I, being an optimist, think there will be such a nation. It may be a long way off, but I see signs of it; human life lengthens; air, food, light, work, and play are more evenly distributed; the mind has been freed from many degrading and foolish burdens. We have no hair-shirt saints now, nor saints who gained their sainthood by deserting their kind, and living in caves on roots and water; but we have saints who are so, because in the midst of a world of temptation they have kept themselves pure and unselfish. The good work will go on, I am not afraid, but it is not worth while to spend time wishing about things; let us see what we can do for the children of to-day with the tools and material at our hand. Results can be obtained out of imperfect material by patience and skill, which far surpass what can be obtained out of better stuff with less care.

People often think that if they could only bring their children up in some quiet country village, where it was always afternoon, their boys would all be virtuous and their girls would all be modest. Nothing could be more mistaken. I have ques-

tioned many boys coming to the city from their country homes, and their universal testimony has been that the talk and the atmosphere of the country grocery or the barn where the farm boys congregate, was far viler and far more demoralizing than what they encountered here; that the examples of noble living, generosity, the brotherhood of men, the larger, freer life of the churches, were far greater stimulants than anything they ever saw at home. Many a girl has told me that the neighborhood gossip, the little talk of a village, the small questions which absorbed whole families, were far more belittling to her nature than the temptations of dress, and display, and amusement, which presented themselves so glitteringly before her in the brilliant panorama of city life.

Rest assured there is no better school, as things now are, in which a boy or girl can be trained for the battle of life than in a great city, where the best talent has been converged for the development of mind and body; where religion is draped in her loveliest garments; where that wonderful instrument, the voice of man, utters its most persuasive sounds; where, if the foe be pressing, the weapons with which to ward him off are most numerous. It is not in seclusion from all the foes which lurk in the path of life that the best and most useful men and women have been trained, but in the thick of the fight, where every one had to be on the alert and the guard could never be dismissed. Some temptations may be lessened by a country life, but there are others, just as subtle, which take their place,

as hard to master and as damaging to the soul, if allowed to conquer. Browning's famous poem, "In a Spanish Cloister," shows very visibly what sins can be nurtured within the absolute separateness of a convent, from which the world is supposed to be shut out.

Now, of course, I cannot in a "Five-Minute Talk" even sketch a system for training children. I can only mention one of many general principles. Try and use skill and not force. In the novel of the "Talisman," Cœur de Lion severs a bar of iron with one blow of his battle ax. Saladin throws up his silken scarf, and cuts it with his sword as it floats down. One used force, the other used skill. You can force a boy into your way, and you have attained your end, but at what cost? You have engendered sullenness, and a burning sense of injustice, which often colors his whole life. On the other hand, you can so skilfully manage him that your way becomes his way, and he does cheerfully what he should do, and enjoys doing it. Can you do it with all boys? you ask. No, you cannot. There are some boys so mean that you might as well try to make silk purses out of a certain animal's ears as do anything much with them. God help you, if you have to deal with such a one.

OBSCURING THE VIEW OF CHRIST.

IF I were asked to put in one short sentence a definition of Christianity, I should say "devotion to Christ." You will often hear it defined as belonging to a certain Church, professing doctrines, following certain customs. For example, I have heard it said: "I do not dance, I am a Christian. I never play cards, I am a Christian." The essence of Christianity is a personal devotion to the person of our King and Saviour, Christ.

Now there are several ways by which this great truth is obscured. Let us talk about some of them. One is by putting too great stress on the Church idea. It is perfectly unnecessary for me to state the absolute need of a visible and organized Church. Christianity, as far as I can see, would be perfectly dead without it. If that were not so, our Lord never would have organized one, or insisted so strongly on every one belonging to it; but have we not often put the casket for the jewel? If you were asked: What makes you a Christian? would you not be very apt to say: "I have been baptized, confirmed, I go to Communion, I belong to

the company of Christian believers." All true, but is the first thought in your mind, "I am a Christian because I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that belief moulds and governs all my life?" Remember, the only object of the Church is to bring the person of Christ nearer to you. Every ceremony has that in view. Why do we have a procession? To symbolize the army of Christ. Why is a cross carried? To show forth suffering as the banner under which Christ fought and we must fight. Why are there lights? To bring to your mind the Light of the World. Why do we wear white? As a sign of the whiteness and spotlessness of our Master, Christ. Unless the idea of the person of Christ is kept constantly alive in you by your church-going, by your Communions, by your observance of ritual, by your Lent and your Easter, you are only holding a low form of Christianity. I do not say that good does not come of it, that it does not elevate character, but it is very far below the Christianity of the Gospels.

Then another thing that obscures the person of Christ is the common practice in the Roman and Greek Churches, of making the Virgin Mary the great intercessor with God, in the place of Christ. Her altar, or the one devoted to the saint most in fashion, is the one thronged. She absorbs devotions which should be given to Jesus alone. You might say to me: Do you not believe that she, with all the blessed dead, intercedes with God for us sinners? Yes, I certainly believe that. Why should we stop interceding for others because we

happen to die? I am sure the Blessed Virgin puts up very fervent prayers for us, and so do St. John and St. Peter, and all the holy company; but there is a vast gulf between that pious belief and putting her, as is done in Roman and Greek practice, really in the place of Christ. It was the conviction that this cult was carried to extravagant lengths that made the compilers of our Prayer Book put but little on that subject before the people. Some in our Church blame them for this, but if they erred, it was on the safe side.

Then another mist before the person of Christ is the system followed by a large body of people, which I will call for convenience the Moody system, and which makes feelings the test of a true Christian. If you feel good, you love Christ. If you feel you are saved, you are saved. I shall never forget the shock I felt on overhearing a man say to Mr. Moody: "I was saved last Friday night at a quarter past eight." Of course the man meant that just at that moment he had felt a great glow of excited feeling, and he took that for an assurance that his belief in Christ was real. Now there is no more uncertain guide about Christianity than our feelings. Feelings depend on weather, on digestion, on circumstances, often on the way a person has met us, or our business matters have shaped themselves. I am to go on doing my duty, no matter whether I feel pious or indifferent, glowing or dull. Those moods may change.

Then another very widespread way of obscuring Christ is the idea that if you are very active in

good works it proves that you love Christ very much; that a zeal for doing good is a zeal for Christ; that it makes no difference at all what you think as long as you work; that you may hold, or not hold, belief in the deity of Christ, the necessity of the sacraments, even the belief in a personal God, as long as you help in hospitals and reformatories, and run around with various societies. Do not think I would depreciate benevolent agencies. When a man loves Christ he will work for Him, just as when a man loves a woman, he will work for her; and, like that, his work must spring from personal love, or else Christ gets no nearer to our vision. Any other work is the carrying out of our own views, or the views of some one we follow. It does not light up the face of Christ. Now different religious bodies tend to one or the other of these ways of obscuring Christ. We Churchmen are apt to exaggerate the Church idea; Romanists, the idea of other intercession than that of Christ; Methodists, the idea of trusting to feelings; Calvinists, the putting theologies in the place of Christ; and all bodies the mistaking of zeal for good works for zeal for Christ. I do not for a moment imply that any of these views blot out Christ. They co-exist with very great love for Him, but they do detract from the grand, perfect picture of Him which is drawn in the Gospels.

THE FUTURE OF THE HEATHEN.

WHEN I was a boy I was taught in Sunday school that all the heathen went straight to hell, that they with all their babies were eternally lost. That was the general belief then, and that is the belief even now where Calvinism extensively prevails. Only the elect are saved; the heathen are not among the elect; therefore they are doomed to hell. Short and convenient, if it were only true, and if there were anything in the Bible or in the Creed of the Church to countenance it. But just think in what consequences such a monstrous belief involves you. Of one heathen creed alone, Buddhism, there are 500,000,000 adherents. Now probably only a few of all these millions have heard at all of Christianity, and what they have heard was often just a sermon or two by missionaries who spoke their language just as Frenchmen who have been here two or three years speak English. Are all these vast multitudes to be sent to hell for not believing something of which they had not even heard? What frightful injustice it would be in God the All Merciful to doom them everlastingly

for not doing what it was impossible for them to do! No one can suffer in hell, however much the sins of others may have forced them to suffer on earth, who did not fully deserve to suffer; and how could these ignorant people deserve it?

When you are thinking about the lost, you must try and get some clear idea as to whom you mean before you put in all the uncounted multitudes who do not hold to Christianity or Judaism. Remember none are lost because they were predestined to be lost, or because God was tired out with them and gave them up, or because they could not reach a standard impossible for them to reach, or because they mistook the meaning of the Gospel. Every one who is lost, is lost by his own fault, his own wilful wickedness; for weakness, stupidity, or invincible ignorance can never damn anybody. People who know right and prefer wrong are alone those who expose themselves to damnation. You may say that so many of the heathen are horribly wicked; yes, but it is not wilful wickedness. They know no better.

I have just been reading Parkman's history of the early Jesuit martyrs in Canada. You feel almost as the Jesuits did, while you read, that all those Hurons and Iroquois were just devils from hell; and that unless they were converted, hell must be their portion; but when you think calmly, you feel that they knew no better; that those were the ideas of proper conduct in war or peace which they had inherited; that no man ought to be punished for ignorance; and that as the Gospel standard of

justice is God's own standard, it is impossible to think of Him as doing such a thing. No, let us think about the heathen as in some place where God is teaching them; where the Holy Spirit of God is enlightening them; and that a great law of evolution from a lower to a higher plane is working with them.

These terribly harsh ideas about the future of the heathen, happily passing away now, arose from the baseless notion that there is nothing good or true in any heathen religion; that it is all false, and the work of the devil. Now it is perfectly inconceivable that God, while He was revealing Himself more perfectly to a few, should have concealed Himself completely from all the rest of the world. A God who cared only for a few people in a little strip of land half as large as some American counties, would not be a very good God. I would not care to worship Him. St. Paul knew much better than that when he preached to the heathen at Lystra, and told them that the God of whom he was talking had never "left Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with love and gladness." Or again when he told the Athenians that "God was not far from any one;" or again, when he says that "God had written a law in the hearts of the heathen, their consciences excusing or accusing them."

St. James did not hold this narrow view when he said: "Every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights," not just

the good gifts of Christianity, but every good gift everywhere. No human being anywhere can now, or ever could, think, say or do a good thing unless it was inspired by the Holy Spirit; for there is no other source of good in creation than the one good God. There never was any great creed, or widely held religious belief, that did not contain many germs of truth, and very much that was good, and many leanings toward God. St. Augustine only formulates a great fact, when he says: "There are no religions without some truth." In Buddhism and in Confucianism,—this last creed being held by four hundred millions of people,—moral goodness of the same nature as we understand it in the Bible is insisted on. Of course all these heathen statements of truth are just like some glimmering spark in comparison with the splendid sunlight of the Gospel of Christ; but still they show that all heathen creeds are not altogether without the power of drawing men to God.

Do not say, what is the use, then, of teaching them Christianity? We must teach that because it is nobler, fuller, grander; and God wants all men to come to the fullest knowledge of the right.

THE ATTACK ON CHRISTIANITY.

WHEN our Lord explained the Bible to the two disciples on the walk to Emmaus, and also at different times to the eleven in Jerusalem during the forty days between His Resurrection and Ascension, you do not suppose that he explained to them all the difficulties of chronology, geography, natural history, etc., which come up now in the study of the Bible; told them, for example, that the sun did not go around the earth as Moses said it did, and that the flood was not universal. The world was in no such stage of advancement as would have made such teaching profitable or comprehensible. He doubtless showed them the great principles of Christianity as illustrated in the Scriptures, and above all inspired them with the conviction that no power of man or spirit could in the end prevent the triumph of the Gospel of Christ, and that made them stand steady under the fiercest fire. Now, have you any such confidence? Are you not one whit troubled by the noise and tumult of the attack on Christianity?

The assaults on Christianity are very vigorous now and very insidious. The poison is wrapped up in the sugar-coated pill of some novel, or couched in the brilliant essay of some "litterateur" or draped in the robes of some dignified professor, or scattered far and wide on the airy wings of some newspaper article. The comic papers make the Church and all its ways the butt of their jokes, and you come to think where there is so much smoke, there must be some fire. It worries and frets you. You say to yourself, "Well, perhaps I am mistaken, perhaps the Bible is not as a whole the Word of God, but is, as some say who put 'Reverend' before their names just a collection of doctored old Jew morals, in which there is 'a grain of truth in a bushel of chaff.'" You do not give up, you do not abandon your hold on the Bible, but your understanding does not seem to be opened so that you say firmly and boldly, "This is the Word of God, this is the Lamp of the world."

Let me offer you some thoughts which have occurred to me and others as good props and crutches for the weak-kneed. And first, lay it down as a principle that you cannot be expected to overhaul the whole grounds of your belief every time it is questioned. Suppose you had planted a garden and people should come along and say: "I do not think the plants are taking root," would you think it necessary to pull them all up and see whether that was true? So when you hear the assertion that Christianity is false, or is one-sided, or is only half made up, or is insufficient, say to

yourself: "I have heard this before. I have reflected on this. I have gone over the ground. I cannot remember all the arguments now, but I remember they were sufficient, and I have not the time to pull up all these things in the garden of my soul and see whether there are roots to them." We are all of us too busy to be every day hesitating whether this or that statement of Scripture is possible of adaptation to something some lecturer says or some book states. Ought we not also to be careful about exposing our minds to the influence of bad literature and infidel talk? You would not, unless forced by dire necessity, go into a house with the yellow label "Smallpox" on the door; why then should you willingly expose your ears and your minds and souls to the contagion of infidel talk, infidel lectures, infidel books? Much, of course, we cannot help hearing. It is in the air, but when you do hear it do not think you are called upon to overhaul everyone of your beliefs, and see whether they will hold water.

Again, the opponents of Christianity are very noisy, and cry and shout and beat drums and yell, "Christianity is an old worn-out thing, and will not answer for the Twentieth century," etc., etc., and they make such an ado that you think they must be in the majority, and must be right because they are so blustering. Now, a little, insignificant thing can make a great deal of noise. A baby a month old can break up the most solemn service in the world. A mouse has scattered more than one company of sensible and well-educated women.

Remember, then, noise and assertion are no proofs of strength, or of truth; and if you will take pains to examine, you will find that the noise is made by very few people, and that the adherents to Christianity are as ten to one in comparison.

Then, again, do not fret yourself with the idea that the opposition is worse now than it ever was, and that the Bible and the Church are losing their hold on the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. I grant that many things which have been thought vital to the Christian Faith in ages gone by are dropping away from it, and views which once were considered rank heresies are coming to the front, and such things cause many good people to sit uneasily in their chairs and think the deluge is coming; but rest assured that never since the beginning of the world have the great rock principles of the Word of God, and the example of Christ been more firmly and widely held than now. This fierce attack upon your religion, just like the attack upon your country, which so many of us remember, only ought to make you love it more, not frighten you. The very sight of cannon trained on the Church of God ought to fire you with a great enthusiasm, move you with a great love, weld you together in an unshaken hope. I tell you this cause is God's, and it cannot fail.

DOES THE WORLD GROW WORSE OR BETTER?

DOES the world grow worse or better? You hear a great many people say that it grows worse, and the most doleful and depressing sermons are often preached on this subject, but I am not at all of that opinion. I feel sure that the world grows better every day; that there is a very distinct elevation in human character, and a vast increase in unselfishness. By the world, I mean our world, Europe and America, for that will be enough for our inquiry. The vast millions of Asia and Africa are on such a very different level, that the same arguments do not apply to them, though I doubt not that even in their case an advance could be proved true.

Certainly the world is better materially. The newspapers and the public lecturers may paint you dark pictures of the down trodden workmen, and the oppression of capital, and the miseries of the poor; but when you compare the condition of the poorer classes with that of a century ago, you will see an astonishing improvement. The wages are far better. The working classes have a thousand

comforts now where they had one then. They dress better. They have better food and more amusement. The laws governing them are much more liberal, and they are considered far more by politicians and law-makers. Even the submerged tenth is not as deeply submerged as it was thirty years ago. Wretched as their lives are and hopeless as their state seems, mostly from their own fault, yet their story in the past shows a still more horrible mode of life and a still deeper degradation. The efforts now made to relieve them are more sensible, persistent, and extensive, and the work daily grows.

Then certainly there is more general mental improvement. The "little red schoolhouse" multiplies like the planted corn. Wherever a few houses are got together, there forthwith is found the one where children are taught. The cheapness of the newspaper and of the very best as well as the very worst books, puts a vast mass of information within the reach of the poorest, and it is eagerly accepted and read. The proportion of illiterate decreases daily. Great questions with which a century ago only a few of the learned were concerned, are now intelligently discussed in every four corners' meeting. In every cottage and in every tenement room are found pictures which even ten years ago would have cost a hundred dollars apiece, now by the new processes costing only a few cents. Parks, flowers, concerts, are accessible in every large town without any expense except the few cents of car fare. Contrast all this with all the

dulness and crass ignorance of a century ago, and you will see that a man must be bereft of his senses not to recognize an extraordinary intellectual advance in the European and American man.

Yes, people will say, materially and mentally there may be improvement and advance, but in the moral and spiritual life there is great deterioration. It is here the world grows worse. Now, if this be so, it is a most awful conclusion; and instead of rejoicing in the material and mental progress, we ought to weep over it; for men who are comfortable and intelligent and yet unprincipled, are a thousand times more dangerous than impoverished and illiterate men. A clever devil is much more to be dreaded than an ignorant devil, because he can plan wickedness better and execute it more knowingly. But it is a pure delusion that the world is morally and spiritually worse. You hear more of sin and crime because the sources of information are so multiplied. Any lapse from right in even the remotest village is heralded all over the country in less than twenty-four hours. In proportion to the number of inhabitants, vice is much less than it used to be, only then the news of it was confined to its own neighborhood. The criminal records of fifty years ago show in proportion a far greater average of crime than those of to-day. There is much more unselfishness than there used to be. An earthquake, or a flood, or a fire in countries thousands of miles away, awakens a response in our midst, and efforts are made to relieve it. We would not tolerate for a moment the cruelty, the indiffer-

ence to pain, the sight of human suffering, which marked the era of our forefathers. We have begun really to carry out the Gospel teaching of universal brotherhood, though of course it is still in its infancy. You will hear that there are not so many saints, but it takes a great deal more now to make a saint. The standard of saintship is higher. Saints are not canonized now for wearing more prickly hair shirts and eating nastier food than anybody else; or for remaining unmarried, but for deeds of real usefulness to their fellow-men. There never was so much interest in great spiritual problems as now. Every prominent paper gives them a great deal of attention, and they are discussed in every lecture room.

Of course there is much confusion in this discussion, and the sea of talk casts up much mire, but that the feeling exists, proves that men are not so sunk in material things that they have forgotten loftier themes. They burn to know now, as they never did before, and woe to the Church that ignores this intense desire, and offers the hungry only stones and rubbish and stale cakes. When I contrast the number of men engaged in Christian work now, with the scattered few who took part when I was young, I need no other argument to prove to me that the world grows better. Five minutes are only enough to open this subject, but let all take hope. We are not going down hill to destruction; we are every day mounting higher, and coming nearer to the presence of the Lord.

IS CHRISTIANITY GOING TO LAST?

I HAVE been asked two very important questions: "Is Christianity going to last?" and "If Christianity goes, will our morality necessarily go with it?" Let us try in a very small compass to say a few words about these two things. And first, I know the cry has been raised from the first century that Christianity would not last; and since I was a small boy, I have read in the newspapers and magazines that it was rapidly disintegrating, but it seems to me a pretty lively corpse. Christians are apt to think that it is now being attacked more fiercely than ever before, but that is a mistake. The fashion of the attack has changed, but it is no hotter than it has been before. Let us look and see if there are any facts to show that Christianity is dying out.

If I heard a man say that trade was declining, and then looked about me and saw the streets and wharves crowded with loaded wagons, new buildings for trading purposes going up in every direction, stores at a premium, fleets of ships and trains of freight cars arriving and departing, and every

token of a magnificent movement of all kinds of merchandise, I should conclude that the croaker I had heard was mistaken. So now, when I hear the cry that Christianity is dying out, and I look around, what do I find? Why, everywhere, splendid churches built with alacrity and joy, and the old ones restored, vivified, crowded, the sums given for the support of religion enormous and increasing every year—and I know that keen, sharp Americans do not give their money to issues they consider dead. I find the band of the defenders of Christianity ready to meet every blow; and in every country, intellect and genius of the highest order serving under the Cross. It may be true that there are not as many churches in Maine or Vermont as there were fifty years ago, but there are not as many Americans there as there were then, and any loss there is more than balanced by the hundreds of churches every day springing up in other places. Talk of Christianity dying out, when every day in the year three new Methodist churches are opened. Wherever there is any life at all in the parishes, the churches are full. There are ten active male members of every Christian organization where there was one fifty years ago, and that is a very great sign of swift-coming blood. As long as things continue at this heat, how can I agree with what I read not long ago in a well-known magazine, "that in the minds of those whose views are likely to become the views of society at large, belief in Christianity as a revealed and supernatural religion has given way." My

senses tell me the contrary of this, for I see the fruits of Christianity living and blooming and just about the healthiest thing there is around. It shows itself no local, but an universal, religion; not the French or the Armenian light, but the Light of the World. It is, to all appearances, and as far as its fundamental principles are concerned, as likely to fail as the sun.

Suppose the belief in God and supernatural religion should be done away, will there be any sure grounds for morality to rest upon? Are not the virtue of our daughters, the honesty of our sons, the brotherhood of men, gentleness, enthusiasm, righteousness, bound up (as far as we are concerned) in the Christian religion, and as far as the whole world is concerned, in a belief in the supernatural? That is the second question. Sceptics laugh at that and point you triumphantly to hundreds of men and women who are living perfectly pure and righteous lives, and yet who do not believe one iota of Christianity. Let us see what that argument is worth. If a man were brought before you as an example of the possibility of living without food, you would ask how long has he been without it; and if the answer was, "A day or so," you would reply, "Let us wait a week and then we will see." So with these pure and good infidels who are shown you. Were they brought up and nurtured in infidelity? Were their fathers and grandfathers agnostics? Not at all. They live in a Christian land. They breathe a Christian atmosphere. They enjoy Christian protection. They

inherit from long ancestries of Christian people. We must wait for a generation which never knew what Christianity was, which never was subjected to any of its modifying influences, before we accept examples of the possibility of morality without Christianity.

But you will be told that there have been and are nations, non-Christian, which have recognized the great principles of morality. Yes, but there never has been any nation that did not join this morality with a religion, and when it lost its religion, it lost its morality. We know from the Greek plays that in Greece morality and religion were inseparably connected, and when the Greek religion went down before advancing light, what do we find recorded by the greatest historians?—fearful depravity in public and private life. When the Roman religion disintegrated, there rushed in upon the State a fearful anarchy, a horrible cruelty, a despair, a wickedness so amazing that we can scarce believe it. Take the mere shell of religion in the Fourteenth century and we find the mere shell of morality. Take France, where religion has been so derided, and what sort of a morality has come of it?—the universal worship of lubricity.

But, say the haters of Christianity, we are developing mind and cultivating social science, and that will take the place of religion. Do you in business consider a man's education any guarantee as to his honor and his reliability? Is not an educated rogue the very worst? Cultivate social

science by all means; but it is pure lunacy to think it can supplant the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Jesus Christ. Nothing but Christianity now keeps the stronger from totally swallowing up the weaker. Take it away, and the cry will go up: "There is no God, and I will do as I please, and I will take your house and ship." With the Christian religion rises and sinks all you hold dear in society, in your country, in life.

TRUE SELF-EXAMINATION.

LET us take up some points about the oncoming Lent which we may call "inward" things, which can be known only to yourself and God, such as self-examination, private prayer, struggle against sin, etc. While the effects of these must, of course, be evident to those who live with you, the causes must be secret and hidden, otherwise the effects cannot be produced. Take self-examination. One of the most wonderful things in this wonderful human nature is that we can be so profoundly ignorant of very great defects in our own character, and pride ourselves on virtues which exist only in our imaginations. I was once asked by a parishioner of importance to tell him his faults. I said:

"Do you seriously wish to hear, not what I, but what all who know you think to be your character?"

"Yes."

"And will you promise not to be angry?"

"Yes."

I then painted him his picture as the community generally had drawn it, "nothing extenuate and

nought set down to malice." He flew into a great rage, and said :

"It is perfectly absurd. I am no such man at all."

I do not think he ever quite forgave me, and it cured me of telling people their faults, unless obliged to do so.

It is a very risky thing to ask even your most intimate friend to tell you your faults. If he does make a good diagnosis, you will not like it, and it will be the rift in the lute of friendship, or his affection will blind his judgment, and he will merely confirm you in your false opinions. Do not suppose that, as a rule, the mean man thinks himself mean, or the fretful, nagging woman imagines that she is anything of the kind. You will hear it said that every one does know his faults, only he does not like to think about them, and, if he can help it, never opens the door of the closet where they are kept. This may often be true, but generally, as in disease, there are symptoms which the person notices but never connects with any grave malady, and is much surprised when the doctor, on being told them, says: "You have such and such a malady." For example, a person may notice that he gives unwillingly, that he calculates how little he can give without a twinge of conscience, that he is not interested in causes where much giving is required, that he sets great store by that sweet phrase, "charity begins at home." But when these symptoms are all presented to an expert and he says immediately: "You are stingy," the man is

very much ruffled and thinks the verdict most unjust. You may say, "A man knows himself whether he is or is not an adulterer or a liar." Yes, but I have talked with adulterers and liars, and each one had elaborated a theory for himself which made his particular case very different from any other. The facts could not be denied, but the circumstances leading up to the facts were draped and gilded and disguised, so that adultery and lying seemed very hard names to the guilty ones.

Of course any man who is not a fool must have some knowledge of himself, some idea of the tendencies of his mental and moral nature, some estimate of the temptations which do most easily beset him, or he could not do his part in the treadmill of life; but such knowledge is often very superficial, and just enough to carry the man on without glaring outbreaks. The first thing to be decided about self-examination is, "Do you really want to know yourself, or do you prefer to live in the fool's paradise where you now are? Will you be resolute in probing to its depth your make-up, or are you content with the vague outline which you now have? Are you willing to face some ugly facts which are lurking under the thin veneer, and which you strongly suspect are there awaiting you, or do you shrink from any such self-knowledge for fear of being made uncomfortable and uneasy?"

There are thousands of people who would not for the world thoroughly examine themselves. They are too cowardly to face the disclosures. But we will assume that you really feel a desire to know what

manner of man you are, and are determined to get at the bottom facts, what shall you do? Now, in my opinion, the first thing is to go down on your knees and have a good hearty pray. Not a saying over of a dozen "Our Father's" or "Now I lay me's," as the manner of some is, but a crying of the heart unto God to give you some light in this matter, to open your eyes, to cleanse your understanding, to give you courage, to drive away prejudice. I do not believe any thing like Christian self-examination can take place without being preceded by such praying. Then take the table of the Ten Commandments and ask yourself questions about it. There are plenty of lists of questions which you will find very useful. It will never do to read over the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods but Me," and say, "O, I am not guilty here, I do not worship idols." Of course you do not, you couldn't if you wanted to do so, for even those wonderful young men and women who call themselves American Buddhists have not yet put up any graven images of Buddha; but are you not guilty of idol worship in a very true sense—worship of the idol gold, the idol pleasure, or the idol family? This will indicate the spirit in which the questions are to be asked. Go through the whole table that way carefully and prayerfully, and if at the end, you do not know much more about yourself than you do now, I am much mistaken.

God help you to put that knowledge to some use.

SOME WORDS ON CONFIRMATION.

LET us talk about confirmation. Without entering into all the nice questions being constantly discussed as to whether it means this or that, let us base what we have to say on the following great principle. Confirmation is a time for beginning a closer religious life, a time for publicly announcing that as for us, in the future our Master shall be Christ, and His army the one in which we will fight.

No matter what else you may hold about Confirmation, you certainly hold that. Now there are three general classes of people to be considered in regard to Confirmation. Children, adults brought up in the Church, and adults brought up in other religious systems. Take children—clergymen will differ about the age at which children should be presented, and some bishops announce that they will not confirm persons under a certain age; but children differ very much, and many at twelve are able to grasp the meaning of the step they are taking much better than others at sixteen. If asked to name a general age, from which only

peculiar gifts and graces should induce a rector to depart, I would say, fourteen.

In the first place, not much spiritual experience can be expected from children, and any profession on their part to have deep feeling about sin, and the dealings of God with the soul, should be regarded with suspicion. I remember a girl of twelve coming to me to be prepared for Confirmation. She said that she felt herself the worst of sinners, and did not see how God could pardon one so vile as she. I said: "Nonsense, Mary, you are a very nice little girl, and have always been obedient to parents and teachers, and very conscientious, you are not the worst of sinners." On examining her, I found she had been reading the biography of some unhealthy and precocious child, and thought she must say such things to be a worthy candidate.

St. Catherine of Sienna did indeed flog herself for her sins at six years of age; but St. Catherine did many lunatic things, and was about as impossible a guide for a Christian girl as could well be found. Any child who is not perverted and degenerate, who knows what truth is and honor, and realizes the fatherhood of God, and the redeeming love of Christ, ought to be presented for Confirmation. Any child who will answer (not perfunctorily), when the question is asked: "Why do you want to be confirmed?" "Because I think it will help me to be a better boy or girl," is in the proper frame of mind, without waiting for any deeper convictions. The priest ought to see that children know the

letter of the Catechism, and as much of the general meaning as can be imparted. Neither children nor adults grasp it all, and I have generally found the children of the class quite as well prepared intellectually, as a great many of the adults.

Now about the adults. One class are persons who have never tried in any way to lead a religious life, but now, pricked by conscience, or from some crisis in their lives, or moved by the pleading of pastor or friend, wish to try. They are often very hazy in their doctrine and very crude in their notions of a religious life; but if they do sincerely desire to live nearer to God, and are willing to do their best to follow the counsels of the Church, they ought not to be rejected. It will be found difficult to get men to follow regularly any course of instruction. They will plead affairs, and you will have to be satisfied with their reading some of the many short and effective tracts, on Christian doctrine and the religious life. My experience is that the majority of candidates seem to have no deep searchings of heart, and no very moving conviction of sin. They are generally sincere and earnest, and I prefer those who do not make such great professions to those who do. A lady once said to me: "I know I am ready to be confirmed, for I have never played cards in Lent." I tried to show her some of the "weightier matters of the law," but the soil was pretty rocky.

Another class of candidates are those who have been sincere and consistent members of some Christian body, but who feel convinced that the

Church is their true home, and that in her fold they will be able to follow Christ more closely. These are often persons of large spiritual experience and deep personal religion, and make some of the very best parishioners and communicants. They do not need to be told what serving God means, but they need instruction on the points where the Church differs from the religious body they are leaving. The Christian life is the same in the Presbyterian body as in ours; prayer, sacraments, meditation, good works, find their place there as here; but we know the inestimable advantages we enjoy as Catholic Christians, and these the candidate will readily appreciate.

Confirmation is not, as so many seem to think, a reward for having attained great eminence in holy living; but a step, and one of the first steps, in such a life. It contemplates evidently only beginners, and includes very imperfectly informed and very weak people in a spiritual sense. It does expect that those coming shall be sincere in their profession, anxious to grow better, and willing in humility to try the sacramental life, as the best help in doing that. No one ought to be accepted who does not feel that. You do not want people who are being confirmed because their wives want them to be, or because they think every one ought to belong to some Church.

A KEY-NOTE FOR LENT.

I WANT to strike a key-note for Lent. What shall that note be? Let it be some word of warning, some word which, short, piercing, singular, will arrest the attention and remain in the memory. Let me choose the word. It is "lukewarm." Keep that before you as a warning and a danger while the solemn hours of Lent, one by one, join the Lents which are past and gone.

You know what a nauseous thing a lukewarm drink is. We like cold drinks and hot drinks, but just a tepid liquid is sickening. You know what lukewarm people are, half and half, milk and water. If any cause, or any effort to do good, to effect any change, attracts to it only lukewarm people, we despair of it, we know that nothing will ever be accomplished.

Now let us consider lukewarmness in reference to religion, in reference to ourselves, our parish, our Church, our fellow-men, our dear Master. This, remember, is the time to do it. We are on the threshold of Lent, and Lent is no time for sprinkling rose water, for administering sooth-

ing syrups, for coddling and smoothing down. It is a time for shaking up, for spiritual housecleaning, for opening doors and windows in the heart, for snatching the fillet from blinded eyes, for unstopping the dulled ears, for sending sharp arrows between the joints of the world's armor right into the soul. Do not say: "In the old Episcopal Church of our boyhood we did not have all this excitement. When Lent came, we had of course Wednesday and Friday prayers, just prayers with a little reading, and we made some difference in our food, but there was no commotion. We were not made to feel uncomfortable with every day prayers and constant addresses, and early Communions, and Three Hours on Good Friday, and everlasting begging for this or that thing, and rasping sermons on Sundays." Now if there is one thing for which you ought to be thankful, it is that the old-fashioned Episcopal Church has all been swept away, and that now not even her worst enemy can cry "lukewarm," as he beholds her glorious activity.

But while the Church is not lukewarm, are not you? You, eminent member of the Church, always in your place, ever ready to give your quarter, and do your part? Are you not lukewarm, man or woman actively engaged in some part of the Church work, talking much about it, and thinking much about it? Are you not lukewarm, all you who press up to the altar, and wear the livery of the Saviour of the world? And if you hear a whisper in your heart, "No, I

am not," down on your knees, poor conceited soul, and pray God to open your eyes upon yourself. Not lukewarm! Let us rehearse the standards and see for ourselves:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Thou shalt not let the sun go down upon thy wrath."

"If thy right eye, or hand, or foot, cause thee to commit sin, cut it off and cast it from thee."

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

"He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me."

How do you appear when you set yourself over against words like these? And remember that these words were not addressed to some select coterie from which you can wriggle away, and say they do not apply to you; they were spoken to the whole body of Christians, they belong to every age and everybody in every parish. Do you, for example, love the Lord with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? Do you love Him with half your heart, with a quarter of your soul, with a twentieth part of your mind, with a hundredth part of your strength? Is not lukewarm really too good a word for you? Ought not "ice cold" to be put in its place? But "lukewarm" is the right word, for it does imply some warmth. A lukewarm bath might be life, an ice

cold one, death. You do love God in some degree. Generous impulses and high resolves do stir within you. You do try, in some faint, languid way, to follow in His train. I am not addressing cold and heartless formalists; they are not likely to read this book. What I mean is that there is an absence of that enthusiasm, that eagerness, that devotion to our spiritual state, and the spiritual state of the world, that glow, that fire, that rush which would transform the world, and change this slow, halting, unsteady progress of the Gospel of Christ into a magnificent victory!

Now, what do you do, when you find placed before you some lukewarm drink? Why, you send it out to the fire. Do that way with your spiritual life. What fire, do you ask? Why the fire of penitence, the fire of stern resolve, the fire of earnest aspirations. The blessed Food so often on our altars is a fire, the piercing words of Holy Scripture is a fire, prayer is a fire, the giving up of the will is a fire. Take your souls then and warm them up. And what do you say to the lukewarm people in your service? "My son if you want to stay with me, you will have to show a livelier interest, and step around quicker." So God says to us: "My son, if you continue in this languid way, doing a half-and-half duty, if you show no more interest, your lukewarmness will become coldness, and the coldness will become iciness, and you will lose your soul, not because I wish it, but because you will it."

Oh, beloved, let us, this Lent, struggle with lukewarmness; love Him a little more, open our hearts to the fire of the Sun of Righteousness. The ice will melt, the indifference will become enthusiasm; warm ourselves, we will help to set the world on fire.

WHAT IS FASTING FROM FOOD?

LENT has begun—let us talk about it a little. The word is from the Anglo-Saxon, “lencten,” meaning “spring,” because Lent always comes in the spring, though it often begins in February. The time varies, for Ash Wednesday depends upon Easter, and is early or late, as that feast is early or late.

There are two parts to Lent, as, indeed, there are to every act and every ceremony—the outward part and the inward part; that which you do with the body, and that which you do with the spirit.

Let us take up first the outward part. You will hear that the principal duty of Lent is fasting, and the general idea of fasting is that it means simply abstinence from food. It does mean that, but in the Church’s idea it means a great deal more than that. Our branch of the Catholic Church differs from other branches in never having made precise and specified rules about the kind of food you should or should not eat in Lent; and that was very wise, for it is impossible to make any rule that will suit everybody. You will read in the

papers just before Lent the rules set forth by the different Roman Catholic Bishops. They differ in different dioceses, but in every Roman Catholic parish the priest grants any number of dispensations; so that, after all, there is not much more uniformity than among us in regard to the Lent fasting. Some people think that if they substitute fish for flesh they are fulfilling the precept; but that will not work. One of the most delicious and sumptuous dinners I ever was at in my life was given in Rome, in the middle of Lent, by a monsignore attached to the Pope's household. Many were the courses, abundant the wines, but there was not an atom of meat served. Certainly this could not be called fasting. In many parts of our country it would be much more expensive to serve fish at the meals than to serve meat, and to save expense for food is one great part of fasting.

Now, just because your Church has not made any petty rules, you must be the more particular to make rules for yourself on this subject of Lenten food, and I put under that head, drinks and tobacco. In the first place, you ought to ask yourself in the presence of God: "Can I diminish the amount of my daily food?" Many people cannot. It immediately affects their health, and very many never take at any time more food than is absolutely necessary for living. A parish priest whom I knew, limited his food so much that he fainted in church and was ill for a week, and the parish was deprived all that time of Lent services. How much better it would have been for him to be less

abstemious. In another parish, people told me they were afraid in Lent to speak to the rector; his strict fasting made him so cross and so irritable. Now, any fasting that produces such effects is positively sinful. But for those of us who are removed from that utter poverty which spreads Lent over the whole year, some lessening of our food will do us good, even physically. We Americans eat too much anyway, and any doctor will tell you that about half his cases are connected with the stomach and are the results of over-eating. But letting alone any medical effects, our own individual experience tells us that we cannot pray, or think, or listen, or do any mental work, half as well under heavy eating as under light diet; and Lent is a time for a great deal of thinking and praying.

Then does obedience, simple obedience, count for nothing? Soldiers obey many rules because they are the orders; that is sufficient for them. Ought not the Church's orders to be sufficient for us? Where did she find fasting? Where but in her Master's life and example?

But whatever conclusion you arrive at (and, remember, it must not be a self-indulgent conclusion) about the quantity of your food, you cannot be in much perplexity about the power of changing the quality and expense of it. I do not mean that in imitation of the silly acts recorded about some Romish saints, you shall eat any nasty mess, with the idea that it shows your sanctification. I mean that you shall, during Lent, choose plainer, sim-

pler, cheaper food, and take the money saved for holy purposes. It would be undignified to go into a discussion of various foods, but certainly we can instance drinks and tobacco. Unless medically ordered, they certainly can be given up; very expensive things they are, and very many men would feel their loss more than anything else. Perhaps one Lent's experience would show many how much better they were without them.

I know how thorny all this subject is, how many exceptions come up, how experiences differ. I am not expecting to cover every man's case. I am just putting before you a few general principles which may help you to follow the Church's precept of Lenten abstinence.

FASTING FROM AMUSEMENTS.

BUT fasting from food is only one branch of the tree of self-denial. Another great branch is fasting from amusements. I take it for granted that they who read this are the ordinary Christians of the age and country, and I have generally found that they have the same amusements which all respectable and well-meaning people have. They go sometimes to the theater. Some of them play cards. They give dinner parties and dancing parties, and go to such. They read novels. They play ball and roll ten pins, and do not at all follow the twelfth century recipe for holy living, which was to put on a hair shirt, abjure every comfort, and because a thing was pleasant, hold it in horror.

We do not find that this way of action made any lovelier patterns of Christian life than now exist. If a Christian man wishes to see a good play, why should he not? A good play can only have a good influence, and some of the noblest lessons of unselfishness, heroism, reward of virtue and punishment of vice, can be learned from the

stage. Alas, that there should be so few good plays given, and that conscientious Christian people are often obliged to keep away from the theatre, for fear of having their moral and religious sense outraged by words and scenes to which the whole town is flocking! A play is now attracting crowds in one of our cities, which not only exhibits the most shameless immorality, but sacrilegiously shows a Bishop at the altar celebrating the Eucharist. How can anyone with any spirituality at all, or any standard of holiness, witness such a thing? and this play does not stand alone. But the abuse of a thing is not the slightest argument against the use of it, for if it is, you, my friend, must give up your carriage because horses run races and betting is encouraged; and you must give up coffee, for the abuse of coffee is ruining the health of thousands. I will waste no ink then on the question as to whether Christian people should or should not indulge in the usual amusements of their fellows. They do, as everyone can see, and I have no particular quarrel with them for doing so.

But now there comes a time in the Christian year when the Church calls upon her children to keep away from their usual amusements, and she gives reasons for that:

First, that people may see how deeply their lives are rooted in such things, and may discover that they are crowding out all higher, nobler views of life, just making it a place for selfish pleasure. This discovery may be awfully important. It may lead a soul to consider whether

it is not putting evil for good and bitter for sweet; whether to be amused is not becoming with them a much more important thing than to be helpful to others, and self-denying in order to be so; whether they are not becoming luxurious, self-indulgent, utterly worldly in the worst sense of the word. Calling a halt in the rush of amusements will make a man open his eyes to their real value and the tremendous over-importance he has been giving them; and while it would be foolish in him to say: "I never will do any of these things again," he will resolve with God's help not to be such a slave to them as he finds he has been.

In the second place, a stopping of theater going, etc., gives a great deal more time for something more strengthening to the soul and more invigorating to the higher nature; time for more constant worship, time for unselfish work, time for Church causes which often suffer from neglect. I have known many an important Church meeting almost go by default, because at the very hour it was going on, eight or ten of the principal families of the parish were at some public entertainment. Now in Lent, the giving up great entertainments, the sensible restrictions put upon mere amusement, will leave much time for work far more important and far more necessary.

In the third place, the giving up of a much loved amusement is a real cross to many excellent people. For example: This Lent will probably witness a very brilliant season of first-class opera, in which the best singers in the world will be

heard. It will be, to many good people, a positive grief not to see this, a real cross, I repeat; but the taking up that cross and carrying it will be one of the most wholesome tonics for the soul that can be found. Every day will make it felt, and to the question: "Why should I not go," let the answer be given: "I do not go because I am trying to keep in my mind the sufferings of Christ, all that He gave up for me; and by renouncing a little myself, to measure in some degree all that He, all that the saints, all that the elect of the earth, have given up for their fellow-men."

It is nothing to give up something about which we do not care. It is a great deal to turn away from something we enjoy.

LENT READING.

THERE are many people who would find it very beneficial to fast during Lent from novel reading. There is no more harm in reading novels than there is in eating roast beef; but an exclusive diet of either is apt to be over-stimulating and unhealthy. Novels are just as much a part of a man's education as histories or geographies, and no man can be said to be well informed who refuses to read any work of fiction. Some of the very best and truest thought of the day is put into novels, and the most perfect model of good style is to be found in Stevenson's novels. But while all that is true, the reading of novels to the exclusion of other reading, and above all, the reading all sorts of novels without any discrimination as to their moral or their literary merits, tends very greatly to weaken the moral strength, to unbrace the mind, to prevent all serious thought, and to give the most unreal and exaggerated views of every day life.

Now, it is an undoubted fact that the majority of readers are simply novel readers. They never

look into any other sort of book, and the novels they read are generally weak and trashy. Then think of the many immoral novels now published, and which you find on the tables of the most respectable people. But assuming that the novels you read are all superior productions, do you not read too many of them? Do you not really waste a great deal of time on them? Do you not allow them to crowd out a great deal of other reading which is most important for the development of your mind, the extending of your information, the deepening of your character? Suppose, then, you resolve to fast from novel reading during Lent, and to devote the reading time to something a little more substantial. Let history, travel, biography, now have some show. This is also the proper time for distinctive religious reading. How ignorant many of you are of the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity! A clear atheist could floor you in an argument in a moment. You are perfectly unacquainted with even the elementary answers to the foes of our religion. How few of you can give reasons for those views and practices which distinguish your Church, and which are so misunderstood by those who worship in some other way. When you are asked the why and the wherefore, what can you say? You have doubtless even forgotten the superficial knowledge of these things you received in preparation for Confirmation.

Now, is not Lent an excellent opportunity to brush up your knowledge of the plan of salvation,

and the consecrated system of the Church? Try to use this Lent to make yourself a well-informed Churchman. Your rector will be glad to point out to you short, cheap, interesting books on the Catholic Faith and on Church history.

But there is one old-fashioned book which calls for your especial study in Lent, and that is the Holy Bible, the Word of God, the guide to salvation. I do not refer simply to reading more of it than you usually do, but to studying it with some good Commentary or Bible help. You cannot understand a great deal of the Bible unless you do that, for the meaning involves questions of history and customs, and forms of speech which are now out of use, and just reading verses throws no light on such things. But if you will read your Bible with such a book, for example, as Geikie's "Hours with the Bible," a book very easily procured, and very cheap, you will find it transformed for you. Places before so dark will glow with light and meaning. The Bible is a perfect treasure house and no one can read it carefully without finding something new and profitable at every reading. Think of the incredible number of works on the Bible which have been written; and yet every year, in nearly every book, something new and interesting is published. Take up now the devotional study of the Bible, which is something quite different from the intellectual. Go down on your knees and say devoutly the Collect for the second Sunday in Advent, and then turn to the part of the Bible you have determined thus to study; and having

read a few verses, think over those very earnestly, try to apply them to your own spiritual condition, search out their secondary meanings, and fix them in your memory. Not all parts of the Bible are alike useful for this. The Psalms, Job, Proverbs, parts of the Prophets, the Gospels and Epistles, will be found the most profitable. Do not prolong this to weariness, and you will find it full of spiritual aid.

Now, all the fasting of which I have spoken in these three talks is an outward act. Others can see it, and therefore you must take every pains to conceal it, so that you may not get credit for it with men. You must often use pious ingenuity to effect this, for all the good will be lost if your pride and vanity are aroused by the commendations of others on your self-denial and your observance of Lent. The words of Scripture are very pointed: "Anoint thy head and wash thy face (in those times, signs that a man was not fasting) so that thou appear not unto men to fast." Let God alone know that.

CHURCH GOING.

THERE are other "outward points" to Lent besides the different kinds of fasting. There is "church going." I know very well this may be made, and often is made, a purely outward thing. People go to church from a variety of motives:

Because it is respectable to do so, though I assure you, you can be highly respectable and respected in these days, and never darken a church door; there are any number of families of very high position⁷ who attend no place of worship, the more shame to them.

Because you think it an example you ought to set, churches and religion are excellent police agents; city life would not be feasible without them, and while you do not yourself believe in them, yet for the sake of others you must help keep them up, and have a pew and sit in it.

Because your wife makes you go, she gives you no rest unless you go to church sometimes, and you have to do it to keep peace in the family.

Because you cannot shake off the habit of your childhood and your father's way of life; you do

not feel comfortable unless you go more or less to church, although it means very little to you.

Because the music is very superior, and the sermon a fine intellectual effort, and you meet people and see clothes.

All these reasons influence more or less the church-going of many, but I will assume that you believe the public worship of your God and Saviour to be not only your duty but your delight. You love the house of God, and once on Sunday you are to be found there, weather and all other things being equal. Now, I grant that the Church has always considered the "obligations" of Sunday fulfilled by an attendance on the principal service of the Lord's Day, especially if it be a Holy Communion. I also know full well that very many good Christians must take some time on Sunday for a little rest and quiet pleasure, for they cannot command any other time. I hold no ultra-puritanic views about keeping Sunday. But now comes a time when a Christian man wants to do more than his mere "obligation," when he ought to be willing to abridge his Sunday pleasures somewhat for the sake of self-discipline. Resolve then during this season of Lent that you will be present in the sanctuary more frequently than at other times, and that you will persevere in overcoming the greatest difficulties that you may do so. The sacrifice of a pleasant evening with your family and friends, the going out, will brace you up, will do your soul good, to say nothing of the service in which you will engage, and the earnest

words you may hear. Renounce for Lent your inestimable privilege of criticising what you hear. We know of course that you pay the preacher, and therefore have a right to pull him to pieces; but if you will forego that pearl of great price during Lent you will have made spiritual progress.

In Lent there are not only Sunday services, but weekday ones. In any parish of much size there are daily ones. Now I have tried all sorts of hours and all arrangements of services, and I have never hit on one which suited everybody. The rector generally selects the hour which will suit the greatest number. Men in this western country are not generally men of leisure. They cannot leave their offices and stores in business hours, especially if they are employes and engaged for certain hours. It would not be honest to do so. The only week services they can generally attend are evening services, and yet how few of them even do that. Probably out of three hundred male communicants in a large parish, about twenty or thirty will be found at any one evening service, and during the whole of Lent perhaps half of them will not have appeared more than once. Now can you not, individually, show a better example? Do you not need the prayers, the exhortations, the stirring up of the soul, which come with Lent and form the back bone of Lenten services? Even at the afternoon services many men, and certainly many more women, could be present by a little exertion. I have known much occupied business men very regular at a late afternoon service. They wanted

to come, and by a good deal of exertion and extra work they accomplished it and felt the blessed comfort of it.

There is one Lent privilege which all of us ought to prize much more than we do, and that is the opportunity more frequently to receive the Holy Communion. If this be the greatest blessing ever vouchsafed the soul, and the chiefest means of grace, surely no chance of having it ought to be missed. When I was a boy one could not commune more than once a month, and in some parishes, not more than once in two months, for frequent Celebrations were unknown, and the pioneers in weekly Communion were called semi-papists, and all other pretty names. Now in almost all churches there is at least an early Communion on Sunday. Carefully prepared for, there is no act of worship which will be found more precious, fuller of spiritual comfort, more peaceful, more uplifting. Try it this Lent, and prove my words.

LENT CHARITIES.

LET us talk a little about Lenten charity, for charity is one of the great Lenten duties. Now charity is one of the most complicated and difficult questions of the day. What it means; how to do it; when is it an evil, and when is it a good? Volumes are written on these subjects. The great reason for this is that asking for relief is a regular business like any other business, and people make their living by it, and often a very good living. Testimony was once taken in a great English city from about a hundred beggars, and nine-tenths of them testified that they made a good living, and much enjoyed their easy life. You may take it for granted that at least six out of every ten applying at your door for relief, or accosting you on the street, are impostors. Indeed in most cases their breath is sufficient to condemn them. Giving under those circumstances is no charity. It is only encouraging vice. So do not think that by giving an extra number of dimes to beggars in Lent, you are practising Lent charity. Remember also that you can manufacture calls for

charity. The very moment a church starts a society for making clothes for the poor, or giving out second-hand clothes, or supplying food, that very moment candidates will appear. They have never been heard of before, but now they stand out in clear light, and if you look closely you will often find that they are working two or three parishes, and have clothes to sell or pawn. Then, too, we have to look out for the well-dressed knave, who in the politest manner, his white handkerchief to his eyes, tells you he has just lost his trunk, or his purse, or his situation, and needs only the loan of a few dollars, as a remittance from home will arrive in a day or two. One very suave young gentlemen, whom some choirmasters will remember, was so unfortunate as to lose his mother four times. I contributed \$10 toward the last funeral of that much-buried lady. Every chance case of charity ought to be investigated, and unless a parish has an investigating committee, its charity will be generally misplaced and breed more harm than good.

But surely every one must know worthy people who from one cause or another need a little help; women with large families and worthless husbands; men who by some misfortune beyond their control have got behind in the race of life; women left destitute and struggling to get a little start so that they may support themselves. There are plenty of such cases, many of them most pitiful.

If you do not know any, and you must live a very selfish life if you do not, your rector, or some

of your charitable friends will know, and you should make it a very marked part of your Lent keeping to help such cases; and when I say help, I do not mean merely sending a few dollars to the rector to be used as he finds best, but the making the acquaintance of such people, and personally entering into their sad lives. This will do you more good and open your heart more than a purse of dollars sent to some one else to dispense. Do not omit that, but if you possibly can, add the other also. This thing must not be done in any patronizing way. When people are down they are very sensitive. It must be done with delicacy, with gentleness, with the utmost courtesy. You must not be the condescending patron putting yourself out to see the poor, but a pitying man meeting his fellow-man, a sympathetic woman in the presence of her sister woman. A person in reduced circumstances whom I knew received every New Year's day two barrels of flour from two most excellent people. One barrel just came addressed, nothing more. With the other always came a few kind, sweet words, full of good wishes and loving hopes. Out of which barrel, think you the bread tasted the sweetest? There is not a person in need, unless very degraded, who would not rather have ten cents given with delicacy and at some personal trouble, than a dollar shoved at him.

There is one class of needy people in whom I have always taken the greatest interest; young men and women trying to get an education in some one of the many schools, on a very small income,

barely enough to support existence. Now it may be true that such a life toughens the moral fibre, and is a good training; but it will do no harm to soften it a little by the generous help of some sympathizing friend, whose kindly words and occasional dollars will take off the keen edge of that life which separates mere existence from mere comfort. I recommend you earnestly to seek out some such case this Lent.

This Lent charity includes a large and very different outgiving. The various Church causes ought now to receive that help which your saving in unnecessary expense will enable you to give; Missions, Aged and Infirm Clergy, Church building, Church education, etc. Always have in mind, and prepare for the Easter collection in your parish. It is astonishing how much by a little self-denial even the poorest person can give on that day when gratitude and joy should swell our hearts to overflowing.

HOLY WEEK.

THIS is Holy Week. How ought a good Churchman to spend it? How ought he to conduct himself towards the world and in private? How can he draw the closest to his suffering Master? In the first place, it seems to me that any right-minded Churchman should this week abstain entirely from society and public amusement. No matter how alluring it may be or how innocent, during these days, when we are to have in mind the slow and bleeding steps of Jesus our Lord up the Cross on Calvary, it should be put on one side. Women are very apt to spend much of this week in giving attention to clothes, attending "openings" and discussing fashions. It is entirely out of keeping with the events of this week, and must unfit the mind for any edifying participation in the multiplied services.

When I was a boy, the warden of our village church always shut up his store on Good Friday. He was my Sunday-school teacher, and I asked him why he did it. He replied: "How can I be trading on the day when my Lord had to undergo

such bitter trials for me?" This made a great impression on me, and I have always since then been unable to understand how Churchmen who would not for any consideration open their stores on Sunday, can do so on Good Friday. Both days are kept in obedience to a precept of the Church (for any particular keeping of Sunday is not provable from Scripture), and certainly Good Friday exceeds in strictness of observance any Sunday. Much recreation might be allowed on that day which would be entirely out of place on Good Friday. I think families ought to be as careful not to make purchases or to transact business on Good Friday as they would on Sunday, and if possible (I recognize that in large business establishments it might not always be possible) shops and stores should not be opened. In Europe everywhere theatres are closed on Good Friday, and in many places all of Holy Week; we, alas! cannot even keep them closed on Sundays. It is gratifying, however, to note that the public sentiment in regard to Good Friday is year by year growing more churchly. In many cities Boards of Trade adjourn on that day and the public schools are not opened. But on the other hand, in England, although the churches are crowded, so also are the railway trains carrying thousands of merry-makers into the country for a day's pleasure. Beyond the church doors it is a day of great festivity, being one of the few legal holidays.

It was my great privilege to spend one Holy Week in Jerusalem; to go to Gethsemane on

Maundy Thursday, and pray on the very spot where my Saviour prayed that the cup might pass from Him; to walk on Good Friday along the very path He trod; and going up to Calvary, to kneel where the Christians of all the world have knelt for many centuries, and bow my head over the place where His cross was set up; and then on Easter to see the splendid processions, with lights and banners and joyful song, encircling the tomb from which He arose on the first great Easter. It was an experience never to be forgotten.

Good Friday is a day to be spent as far as is possible in church and in retirement. Of late years we have had the inestimable privilege of what is called the "Three Hours," a service held from noon until three o'clock, in memory of the time that our Lord hung upon the fearful Cross. Of course there was the usual outcry at first that it was popish and led surely and swiftly to Rome; but its simplicity and its evident fitness recommended it so heartily that all opposition soon ceased, and now this touching service is held in churches of all grades of Churchmanship. The ritual is of the simplest. The conductor, in his cassock, stands or sits at the head of the chancel steps. There are a few prayers, sometimes from the Prayer Book, sometimes from some authorized manual, sometimes extempore. There is the singing of a few well-known hymns, and then stirring, earnest addresses on the events of the day. Any one who has ever attended a well-conducted Three Hours' service on Good Friday will say that nothing in which he ever joined brought him nearer

to the Cross and the thorn-crowned Saviour. Some may find three hours too long a time to be in church, but it is not obligatory to remain the whole time. During the singing of the hymns the going out and coming in can quietly be done.

However hurried your private devotions may be on other days, they should not be so on Good Friday. You should often be on your knees, confessing your sins, acknowledging the awful difference between your professions and your practice, promising amendment and begging for grace and help from on high. Then you should also in Holy Week give much time to meditation, which is the hardest religious exercise with which I am acquainted, for the thoughts are so apt to wander. Think over your Lord's agonies, caused by sin, your sins also entering in. Think of the love that prompted all this, how impossible to repay. Resolve to do what you can to return some portion of that love, by helping your fellow-men.

Let the word "quiet" be the key-note of Good Friday—quiet speech, quiet action, the quiet that comes with death and burial. So doing, so living, you will come fittingly to a joyful Easter.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR EASTER EVEN.

WHEN one we love lies dead before us, we say to ourselves: "If we only knew where his spirit is! Where has it gone? What will it do?" Now the histories of all nations abound in accounts of wizards, and witches, and sorcerers, who pretended to be able to open the gates of the other world, and show you exactly how it looked, and with much hocus pocus to call back the departed. We have, among us, a very extensive system, which for cash in hand, will bring back your departed friends, have them write messages on slates, put clammy hands on your forehead, and sometimes appear before you, like Hamlet's father, "in their habit as they lived." But we laugh at this sort of thing, and we ask ourselves: What does the Word of God say about the other world, and what comfort can we find in it? Now there is a great deal more about it in the Bible than people think, but let us confine ourselves now to one portion of the subject, not heaven nor hell, but what the Church calls the "Intermediate State." We will not trouble ourselves about what the "Fathers" say,

for we can speculate quite as lively as they did, but we will see what the Bible teaches.

The belief of the Catholic Church from the beginning has been that no one went to heaven or hell at his death, but to a state between earth and those places, where many changes might take place. This doctrine was repudiated by the great body of the Continental reformers; but there has been a great change within the last few years, and now some of the foremost Protestant teachers insist on recasting their whole theology, and coming back to more Catholic and more comforting views of the future. The question is, however, not what theologies teach, but are we Churchmen warranted by Holy Scripture in saying in our Creed: "He descended into the place of departed spirits?" Now our Lord said in exact words after His resurrection: "I am not yet ascended to My Father." Where had He been then? He tells us in just as plain words, for He said to the thief when dying: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Now every Jew knew perfectly well what was meant by Paradise, for it was clearly defined in the theology of the rabbis, and meant the place where the souls of the righteous were, which they understood to be a beautiful garden. But the Bible tells more about this place. St. Peter tells us that Christ after death "went and preached to the spirits in safe keeping, which sometime were disobedient when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Now if you put that in modern English it means this: "That while our Lord's

body lay dead, His spirit, quick and alive, sped forth to the place where the souls of men are in safe keeping, and preached there to the departed." I am unable to tell why St. Peter mentions only one class of these spirits, those before the deluge. What could our Lord have preached there but the good tidings? No one in his senses can suppose He went there to preach damnation. So then, the Bible teaches that the penitent thief, and by inference, all other men, go to a place of security after death; that to one part of that place, called Paradise, our Lord went after His death and preached, and that it was not until after He had been in that place that He ascended to heaven; and therefore, by inference it will not be until after our sojourn there, that we shall be received into glory; for remember, our Lord in His earthly life acted as a representative man—as He rose from the dead, so shall we; as He went into Paradise, so shall we.

But why are not greater details given about the whereabouts and the appearance of Paradise, in the Bible? Simply because in our present state we should not be able to understand them, for we have not the capacity. If I were to read to a group of bores Robert Browning's poems, they would think I was talking gibberish, the words and thoughts would be beyond their mental scope; so how can we understand circumstances and conditions which belong to a state outside the earth and concern spiritual existences only? Those who speak of this state have to use such words as golden, diamond, glass, etc., but I have not the least idea whether

such words apply in another world. Goodness and truth are always goodness and truth, no matter whether they are attributed to God, or to men, or to angels; but color and splendor and beauty of landscape are matters of taste, and depend on how you look at things; and we can only look now with mortal eyes and see only things cognizable by mortals.

A literal description of Paradise would convey to us very wrong impressions. St. Paul says that in an ecstasy he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not possible for a man to utter. If he could have uttered them, he would, for our edification. Lazarus was four days in Paradise, but when he came back he told nothing about it. Beyond a doubt his friends urged him to describe what he saw and reveal what he heard, but he could not put it into mortal words. There is no harm in your dreaming about it and speculating about it. It is a great delight to do so, but all you know about it is that it is a place of unspeakable joy; that it is where Christ has been; that it is the antechamber of heaven. Surely that is a great deal to know. We also know that this Intermediate State is not all one place. You will remember that Dives was in one part of it, and Lazarus in another, and that Judas went to "his own place." Analogy would tell us this, even if the Bible did not. There must be as many mansions in "Sheol" (which is the comprehensive Bible term for this place) as on earth or in heaven, only let us not forget that it is only a temporary

abiding place; that the time is to come when we leave it for heaven or hell.

The Roman Church teaches that the Blessed Virgin has been "assumed" into heaven and is not in the state where other mortals are, and that you can be got out of this state by Masses, but all that is pure speculation. There is not a hint of it in Scripture.

I hope, and it is a hope the greatest lights of the Church have also held, that very many may grow better in the Intermediate State, and, seeking God's face, come nearer to Him.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

LET us continue to talk about the Intermediate State, for there are most interesting points which we have not touched, such as the consciousness of the departed spirits, their occupation, their recognition of each other, their connection with us, the possibility of probation for many of them, the good of prayer in their behalf. We cannot discuss all these themes, but let us think first of the question: "Are the spirits conscious, or do they all lie dormant until the resurrection?" Many Christians have held the latter belief, and they found it in such expressions in Scripture as "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise," "He fell asleep," "He was the first fruits of them that slept."

But do the Scriptures mean any more than what we mean when we use such words? I put on a tombstone the words, "Asleep in Jesus," but I do not mean to imply in the slightest that the tenant of that tomb is lying somewhere in dull torpor. I mean that he sleeps to the sorrow and trials of this world. I mean simply, bodily rest.

I think of his spirit as active, employed, palpitant with life and energy and purpose. You are not any more dull and dead when you are asleep than when awake, as far as your spirit is concerned. Your body may lie quiet as if you were dead; but your soul may be far away climbing an Alpine peak, walking in an Italian valley, sailing a summer sea, battling with fierce foes, never more occupied, never more alive. So in the grave reposes the sleeping body, but the body's tenant has sped to the other world; and there is full of occupation, full of pulsating life, a thousand times more real and exalted because the shackles of the body have been broken.

Take Christ's own special parable about the Intermediate State. Dives and Lazarus are both fully conscious, both know where they are, and one has already grown less selfish, for he thinks of his brothers yet on earth and wants to warn them from his fate. Our Lord certainly did not go and preach to a dead world. St. Paul did not hear voices in a world where all were asleep. It could not be better to depart and go there, as St. Paul wishes he could. Think of those words, "Now I know in part, then shall I know even as also I am known," and you will begin to realize what a splendid world of knowledge opens before the enfranchised spirit.

Do the spirits recognize each other? All nations have thought so. In Homer, Ulysses greets with delight the form of his mother in Hades, and Achilles and Patrocles are friends after death.

Cicero, in that charming book on old age, rejoices in the prospect of meeting and recognizing in Hades those whom he had known before. But never mind these. What does the Bible say about it? When David was plunged in grief over his dead child, he said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He certainly thought then that they would know each other in the next world. Does not our Lord plainly teach recognition when he tells the thief that they shall be together in Paradise? How could they be together without mutual recognition? What does our Lord mean when He tells us to make friends of our wealth, so that when we die those friends may receive us into everlasting habitations? Does He not mean that those whom we have helped will know us, and be the first to welcome us to the other world? But I will be asked, how about those who have been married twice? Will they recognize two wives in the other world? Our Lord meets that by His words about that bond: "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage;" and the following words, which I take from Luckock, are much to the point: "Marriage was an ordinance to provide for the continuance of the human race. It ends with earth, but in so far as a spiritual bond exists between married persons it will continue." There is no eternal principle inherent in marriage. Love, friendship, congeniality, these can endure, but all that is of earth and physical perishes with earth.

But will not sorrow be felt there for the absence of some whom we had dearly loved on earth, but whose lives unfitted them for Paradise? Yes, I am sure it will, for even our own dear Lord sorrows in heaven over our sins; but the clear vision we will have of God's perfect justice will soften the sharpest stroke and fully satisfy us. Can changes take place in the Intermediate State? The Catholic Church has always held that one great reason for the existence of such a state is for the purifying of souls. Is it not true of the great majority of souls that they are very imperfect? They do not deserve hell, and yet they are very far from being fit for heaven. Take the most righteous person, does not he, and do we not all, need much cleansing? Do not we need to have the bandage of prejudice taken from our eyes, so that we can see clearly the right and the truth before we pass on to the higher glory?

Do not confound what I say with the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. That implies a flame of fire in which you will suffer physical pain; and it is taught that those on earth can shorten the years of that pain by prayer and Masses; that the Pope has power to let you out of that place. This is distinctly condemned in an Article of our Church, and is an entirely different thing from the gradual progress in holiness and in purity of souls that rest in Paradise.

Then there is the interesting question of longer probation of certain classes; for example, the untold millions of heathen who never heard of

Christ. Can they be punished for not doing what they could not possibly do, and be sent to hell? To hold that is to hold Calvinism, not the Catholic creed. But that does not apply to us. We have had a sufficient probation. From our childhood we have known our full duty. If we sin, we sin wilfully, and must take the consequences. I do not know clearly what an adequate probation is, but I do know that now is the time for us to seek our God.

EASTER THOUGHTS.

I NEVER feel myself so thoroughly a Churchman as at Easter, and I have always attributed it to the moon. Do not smile. What is this April moon to a Baptist or a Presbyterian? Why, nothing more than any other moon; but when a Churchman raises his eyes to the full moon after the vernal equinox, riding gloriously in the sky, he remembers that it is the same moon that looked down on Jerusalem and Gethsemane, and lit up the garden where our Lord knelt in agony; the same moon that faded from the sky as the Easter sun, pale figure of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, flooded with its light the tomb in the garden. And from that day to this, whenever the changing year sees again that moon in its fulness, the whole Catholic Church joins to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord. The date of Christmas is a regulation of the Church; for in spite of all the learning spent upon that subject, that point cannot be definitely settled; but the moon of Easter is a natural sign which nothing can gainsay. There is then no other Sunday in the year like Easter Sunday, none

so dear to the Christian, none so full of beloved memories to the Churchman. Some people think Christmas the first of the Catholic festivals; but as the Apostle says: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain." So if Christ had been born and then had perished on the Cross, and the seal on the tomb had remained unbroken, those who deny His miraculous Birth, and that He was very God as well as very Man, would have had some color for their assertions.

And now that Easter has come, are you going to join in that too common cry: "Hurrah, boys! the fast is over, the dull Lenten duties are past. Let us eat, drink, and be merry." It is true that the fast is over, that the constant Church-going, the withdrawal from society, the penitential tone of the Church services, give place now to other duties and other thoughts. It is not good for any man to overstrain his attention on any one point, and an unending Lent would be as fatal to the evolution of the well-rounded Christian as an unending Christmas.

But do not forget that the joy of Easter must be a sober, a tempered joy. We are not to forget the hill Calvary because the brilliancy and the perfume of the flowers in the garden of Joseph are around us. One of the first things we ought to do in Easter week is seriously to "take account of stock," if I may apply that business term to things of the soul. If we have kept any kind of Lent, we ought now, before its memories have grown dim, to ask ourselves: What

good has come of it? How have I improved? What change has there been in me, in any way? Lent answers to the modern religious word, "revival;" has my love been revived? Am I nearer to God and to my fellow-men because they are my brothers under God? Is my temper any sweeter? Do I nag less at home? (Dwell on that point, for it is a great test as to the usefulness of the past Lent). Do I bear with more patience the daily annoyances and difficulties of my business and my home? Could the clerks and servants if they were put on a witness stand, testify clearly that I was less overbearing and fault-finding and unreasonable? Can my children truly say: "We never knew our father or our mother to be so dear, so kind, so patient with our faults?" Do I realize as never before the wonderful power and beauty of the Church, and what an instrument for doing good she is on earth, the true Body of Christ; and do I mean to be in the future a more devoted son to her and therefore to my Master and my Father? Have I got the better, even in a little way, of my darling sin, whether it be of the flesh, like drink or lust, or of the spirit, like meanness, and envy, and pride?

There are a thousand such questions which every one ought in these first days of the great feast seriously to ask himself. I have gone through Lents, and found myself at Easter as cold and indifferent as I was on Ash Wednesday; and I have come out of others all in a glow with fervor and good purpose and fond hope. If we do not feel

much better for Lent we are apt to soothe our consciences by crying: "It is due to the preacher; he just said words, he did not rouse the conscience; or it is the fault of the services; they were dull and poorly attended, and the singing was anything but edifying; or the weather was to blame, I could not go very often." Now I do not deny that these things have a great influence over anybody's Lent. Our environment affects us immensely, but the real thing to be blamed is, you, yourself. You were half-hearted and fickle and superficial in your Lent; and that is the cause why it has produced so small a harvest. "It is my fault," is what you ought to say.

If you did keep a profitable Lent, I know that you had a good Easter. No matter how small your parish may be, how poor the music, how commonplace the preacher, there must have been music and gladness and eloquence in your heart, as you felt the presence of your risen Lord pervading you, and your religious life lifted up and lighted up by the season which has just closed.

ROLLING AWAY THE STONE.

THERE is great danger in trying to prove doctrines from isolated texts. But while that is true, do not forget that texts often form the most beautiful illustration of truths. An illustration, remember, is never synonymous with a proposition; and texts are often so full of life that their suggestiveness is more and deeper than we could formulate in set theological terms.

I was struck with this on Easter Day, when we have the lesson in which occurs the incident of the angel rolling away the stone from the tomb of Christ. Let us see how that can be used to illustrate very practical and important points. Do not plenty of people now roll up great stones against the door of Christ's tomb and shut Him out of sight, so that no matter how bright the Easter sun, no Saviour comes forth into the morning and the garden? All over this land there are cultured, refined, pure-lived men and women who, when you talk about this open tomb, with the stone rolled away, shake their heads and say: "No man can come again alive out of a tomb in which he was

shut; organic matter dissolves, and cannot be reunited in the same human form. There is nothing but corrupting brain matter. There is no spirit. Your individuality perishes at your death. Nothing of man but his works survives." Now even Martineau, who begins on the outer edge of Christianity, refutes that notion pretty fully in some words like these: "It is impossible to form a steady conception of thought except as originating behind the innermost bodily structures and intrinsically different from them. However much you refine and attenuate the living organism, yet after all thought is something quite unlike the whitest and the thinnest tissue; and the most delicate of fibres, woven if you please in fairy loom, can never be spun into emotions. If any one affirms that the juxtaposition of a number of particles makes a hope, and that an aggregate of curious textures forms venerations, he affirms a proposition to which I can attach no idea. Neither consumption can waste, nor fracture mutilate, nor gunpowder scatter away, thought, fidelity, and love, but only that organization which the spirit sequestered therein renders so fair and noble."

But unbelief is not the only thing that rolls up stones against the Resurrection of Christ. There is unrepented sin. I know very well that because a man is a sinner it does not follow that he is an infidel. A man said to me only the other day: "I live a thoroughly impure life, but I have never for a moment doubted the Gospel of Christ, nor the punishment which is sure to come to me if I die in

my sins." But when the life is darkened by sin there is a stone rolled up to the tomb of Christ; and you cannot realize Easter if you look through eyes shotten with some indulgent appetite, clouded by envy, or hatred, or pride, if your feet be clogged by a heavy weight of indifference, or your back bent down by the load of earthliness you have put upon it. Faithlessness and despondency also roll up a heavy stone to the tomb, so that we see nothing but the blooming roses and the trees of the garden, but no Christ in the midst.

Some one is taken from you, some one who was the very light of your eyes and the breath of your life; a child whose rosy lips pressed yours in holiest love; a wife whose devotion had sweetened the cup of life until it was very nectar; a husband on whom you leaned as a staff. Death snatched them from your clinging arms, and you have gone sobbing after their poor dust, and have rolled a great stone over them and gone back desolate. And now when you visit that cemetery, or when alone and at home you call up the picture of it, is the stone still rolled to the door? Have you no hope, no faith? Are you like John Stuart Mill, who lingered day after day over the grave of the wife he loved so well, shedding so many tears upon that white stone, and not one hope in his breast that it ever could be rolled away, not an atom of faith that the grave could ever give up its dead, or the parted be reunited? He was an atheist. He scoffed at all this history of the Resurrection. Christ for him was simply a good young Jew, a

figure about whom fancy and credulity, and self-interest had thrown a glamor, and whose Church was just an obstruction in the road of human progress. Are you so hopeless in spirit, although you may outwardly go through the forms of religion? Why, my friend, can it be possible that all the heroic lives built up in unselfishness, and defying all the seductions of falsehood, are gone forever? Can it be true that all the thought and hope and moral greatness and pure affection, are smothered forever under that lifeless stone? If that be so, plant no more flowers over graves, and carve no words of hope and tenderness on tombs; for all that will mark only a vast mistake, and is only the outcome of an awful delusion.

But that is not so. The stone has been rolled away. Out of a tomb sealed up like yours—it is a fact as well attested as any other—a Man came forth on Easter morning, and therefore all other men will come out of tombs. The Christian religion rests on this. Tombs cannot hold you. Stones cannot press down your spirit. You must live, and live forever.

THE SNEER AT THE SUPERNATURAL.

PEOPLE who are so smart that they cannot believe in the supernatural, are all the time trying to find some way of accounting for the universal belief in it; for you find it everywhere, and among nations in every stage of advancement. There may be a few little tribes where it does not seem to exist; but when you look close into them, you will find, as Prof. Huxley says, that "while there may be savages without God in any proper sense of the word, there are none without ghosts," and a ghost is only one form of the supernatural. These enemies to the supernatural will tell you, when asked to what they attribute this universal belief in somekind of a supervising deity, that ages ago a certain tribe had a very distinguished chief, whose memory they greatly revered when he died; and gradually they grew to think that he influenced their fortunes, and brought them good luck in hunting, etc.; so they took to worshipping him and invoking him—thus he became their god. They conquered other nations, and forced them also to worship him, and so the cult spread, and all the world was infected with it.

Or they will reel off another fairy story to you, and tell you that many years ago men were terrified by earthquakes and floods and so on, and out of fear they began to pray to the earthquakes, and so on, not to harm them, and in that way a crowd of gods came to the front. Or they will tell you that primitive men thought they saw ghosts, especially when they went to bed in the dark, and they began trying to propitiate the ghosts and offer them fruit and animals, so that they would not harm them, and so, by degrees, the ghosts became their gods.

But all these makeshifts cut a pretty poor figure when you study the career of man, and see what an enormous influence this idea of the supernatural, or of God, which is the same thing, has had in the evolution of humanity; how it has always been the great motor-power; how the questions connected with it have been those around which all humanity has revolved. Something so persistent, so universal, calls for some nobler source than an honored ancestor, or an unsubstantial ghost, or the fear of thunder. It is much more logical to hold that all men believed there was a God, simply because there was one; just as you and I think now when we see a house, that some one built it. But these very acute people cry: No matter how the idea of the supernatural got into the world, it was a childish idea, meant for the infancy of the race; and it has been blown to atoms by the explosives of our day. Knowledge of all kinds has not left it a leg to stand upon.

Now, that kind of talk has been going on ever since the time of Christ; and during the last century, when knowledge has been most extended, has been heard on every tongue, and has been even adopted by some governments; but somehow or other, this troublesome supernaturalism, like the spot on Lady Macbeth's hand, will not "out." It still influences all the habits and customs and laws and ethics of civilized and uncivilized nations. All the ideas of liberty and government and mutual relations of men are bound up with it; and even the gentlemen who scoff at it, and the workmen, who so often utterly neglect it, cannot possibly escape from its influences, its prescriptions, its tendencies. I do not apply this to the Christian belief in the supernatural alone, but to the Turkish, to all the great pagan creeds. I have been travelling lately quite extensively in Moslem countries, and the belief in the supernatural is about the liveliest thing you find; and Hindoos give every year a good deal more money to show their firm belief in it than even Christians do.

Take our own country. A set of very broad-mouthed speakers is constantly declaring that Christianity has had its day; that it is just a hollow sham, and really influences no sensible person. You read this in much of the modern poetry. It forms the stock argument of the men and women in the nasty novels now so popular, who never can love their own husbands and wives, but must always be running after their neighbor's husbands and wives. It is loudly applauded at workmen's

meetings. Mr. Robert Ingersoll makes a great deal of money by spouting it before large gatherings, which break into tumultuous approval; but it is just "great cry and little wool." There never was more money spent for the supernatural than now. It never had more brilliant defenders. It never exerted more influence. It never gathered larger crowds of workers. Just because some ways in which it was formerly held are found to be foolish ways, no more affects the vitality of it than discovering a better way of preserving apples affects the reality of the apple. The supernatural still moulds the world, and Mr. Herbert Spencer, who hates it as the devil hates holy water, has to wring his hands and say: "The supernatural element survives in great strength down to our own day. Religious creeds, established and dissenting, all embody the belief that right and wrong are simply right and wrong in virtue of divine enactment."

Yes, Mr. Spencer, that is so. It is an undying instinct in man. Neither you nor any other mortal can squelch it.

TWO EASTERS IN ONE YEAR.

THIS paper is an account of how I kept two Easters in one year. Do not say this is as impossible as two Popes at one time. There have been three Popes at one time, and I have actually kept two Easters in one year, and came very near keeping two Christmases. Let me tell you how it was done.

The regular orthodox Episcopal Easter, I kept on the regular orthodox day, the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox, in the holy city of Jerusalem. It was a warm, bright, sunshiny day, the 25th of March, 1894; and early in the morning I came down from the hotel outside the walls, passed through the Jaffa gate, and along by the tower of David to the English church, which stands with its schools and offices quite conspicuously opposite the great tower, where Turkish soldiers are always lounging, and where a Turkish band discourses most unearthly music. It is a modern Gothic church, just like a thousand country churches in our own land, nothing remarkable in its architecture, and nothing very much out of

taste. Forty or fifty Americans and English were gathered for the early Communion. The service was conducted on the lowest Church lines conceivable, dull, cold, bare, not even one little flower on the altar, and the ministers in funeral stoles; but the words of the Office were the same dear words in which I had joined all my life, and the place and the hour well served instead of ceremony. One did not need lights and flowers and song to make the heart beat faster, when you found yourself in the very city where the great Head of the Church had suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, and on the third day rose again, scarce an arrow-shot from the spot where you were kneeling. I would have preferred to have gone for my Communion to the Bishop's chapel, where there is a little more warmth and much more ceremony, but it was too far so early in the morning.

These English churches are most admirable for the large number of English-speaking people who usually visit Jerusalem; but as to any impression made on the Jewish and Turkish population of the city, I should say it was very shadowy. Jerusalem has about forty thousand people, and there are no less than twenty-four religious bodies in it, who hate each other as only religious bodies can. About half of these are Christians, and no little Western village was ever more divided and torn up by sectarianism than the Holy City. A large guard of Turkish soldiers is always kept under arms within a few minutes' walk of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, so that they may be ready to

put down the riots and fights which Greek and Latin Christians are ever ready to get up in that world-famed sanctuary.

The Russian peasants, of whom there are always thousands in Jerusalem, seemed to me the most truly religious of all present. Of course they are very ignorant and very superstitious; but it shows a great, if a simple, faith, to take this long journey, and part with their hard-earned money to take it, and their every action shows how thoroughly in earnest they are. The Russian government takes splendid care of all these pilgrims. Enormous barracks are put up, kept scrupulously clean, where they are lodged and fed at small prices, and there are fine churches exclusively for them. I hope sincerely that Russia will one day own the whole place and drive out the Turks, though, after all, it is just as much a place of pilgrimage for them at certain times of the year as it is for Christians. They even come from India to pray in the mosque of Omar on Mount Moriah.

When you see how cramped the situation of Jerusalem is, and how it never could have been a large city, you wonder how the immense crowds which came up to the Passover could have been accommodated. But the rabbis had a convenient way of playing that everything was Jerusalem as far as Bethany at Passover time, and so there was a very wide territory in which people could lodge or camp.

But let us go back to Easter Day. As soon as the early Communion was over in the English

church, I hurried off to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, to see the ceremonies there. You go down a street called Christian street, if you can dignify that narrow lane with the name of street. It has small shops on either side of it, a wretched pavement, and is crowded with picturesque groups—Bethlehem women in loud clothes of glaring pink and blue, with unveiled faces; Turkish women swathed in blue, with only their eyes visible, the eyelids all blackened; wild Arabs, dirty Russians, and still dirtier Jews, with little side curls on their temples, and all these trying to get out of the way of the donkeys loaded with vegetables, disgusting-looking meat, lumber, and building stones. Then you turn down a short, narrow, very dirty street, lined with shops for the sale of candles to burn at the tomb on Calvary—and very handsome candles they are—beads, crosses, and all that olive wood and mother-of-pearl work, known all over the world as Jerusalem work, and in a moment you are in the paved square before the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Many Russian peasants were there kissing the filthy pavement, though not in honor of Easter; for being of the Greek Faith, our Easter is nothing to them; they were in the middle of Lent, and the pavement kissing was in honor of the holy place.

Through the church door I passed, casting a glance of scorn and dislike at the supercilious old Turks squatted on a divan just inside the entrance, drinking coffee, smoking, reading the Koran, and evidently sneering at the excited crowd of Chris-

tians. I felt exactly like throttling one of them, but it would have been madness, for I would have been landed in a few minutes in a Jerusalem jail, which is about equal to an American pigpen. I had immediately before me, on entering, the "stone of unction," where our Lord was anointed for his burial (I accepted in Jerusalem without comment all the great holy places, and did not worry about their genuineness); this was surrounded by devout Russians, kissing and crossing themselves with great fervor. Turning around that, I found myself before the tomb of our Lord. It was blazing with light; ornamental candles and magnificent lamps of gold and silver, the gifts of kings, covered it from top to bottom. The chapel of the Greeks is just opposite the tomb. It was empty and desolate. The door was closed and locked, and in front of it the throne of the Latin patriarch was set up, on which he was seated. Around him was grouped a splendid cortege of European gentlemen, mostly French, in full uniform, or full dress, with orders gleaming on the coat breasts. There were many ladies in plain clothes, and there was a great crowd of bishops and priests in glittering vestments, and many monks of all sorts. The patriarch himself was a perfect blaze of jewels. By slipping a fee into the hand of the porter at the Greek chapel, I managed to get in there; and climbing up into the narrow gallery over the entrance, the whole scene was just beneath me. In fact I had "the best seat in the house."

Within the tomb, services were being held, which of course I could not see; but very soon the procession was formed, to go three times around the sepulchre. Turkish soldiers kept off the crowd, and a most striking and impressive scene it was—the gleaming crosses, the banners sparkling with jewels, the countless candles, every one bearing one, and the gorgeously dressed ecclesiastics. Women took part in the procession as well as men. Hymns were sung and psalms chanted, though I could not distinguish the words; and after the third round the whole magnificent spectacle moved off to the Latin chapel on the other side of the church; and the little Jerusalem street boys resumed their game of tag around the tomb, for their irreverence one sees in this ancient church is very shocking. The moment the Latin procession had moved away, the throne was carried off, the lights put out, the seats piled up, the Greek chapel thrown open for the Lent services, and the lugubrious Lenten chants took the place of the joyous Easter music of the Latins. What a commentary on our divided Christendom! Evening Prayer on Easter, I enjoyed at the Bishop's chapel; a delightful contrast to the cold, barren English church in the city. After prayers some of the congregation went to look at a new Calvary and Golgotha which have just been found out; but the old one was good enough for me.

So passed one Easter; the other, the Greek Easter, was kept a few weeks later in Constantinople. There are twelve days' difference in the Greek

Church time and ours, arising from the fact that when Pope Gregory reformed the calendar, the Greek Church refused to adopt it, and stuck to the old style. Full moons, however, that year made the difference much more than twelve days; and it was not until the fifth Sunday after our Easter that the Greeks in the city of the Sultan gathered for the Feast of the Resurrection. There had been no sleeping for anybody in Constantinople after midnight on Easter Eve; for tin horns, pistols, yells, and all sorts of hideous instruments for noise are considered there the proper things to usher in Easter, as here to herald Fourth of July. I went to the early Communion at the beautiful English church, the walls of which are covered with tablets in memory of soldiers who perished in the Crimean war, and to some of whom every article of the church furniture was dedicated in memory. Then I hurried down to the shore, and soon a swift caique brought me to the other side, and within a few steps of the ugly little Greek cathedral which was surrounded by a noisy crowd pushing and fighting, two or three thousand trying to get into a building which would scarcely hold five hundred. A polite official, however, escorted me to a front seat, so raised above the crowd that I was safe from the pushing, and could see the procession, which was much hustled, and nothing like as fine as the Latin one in Jerusalem. The services were short, done without any reverence, and utterly incomprehensible to me. A handsome priest with long curls read the Gospel in two or three languages;

the singing was very poor, and the only really fine things were the jeweled mitres and robes of the bishops and the patriarch. Nobody seemed much impressed, and I was rather glad when it was over, and I could breathe pure air once more.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THE DEPARTED?

LET us talk a little about the departed and our relation to them. Those who are dear to us are taken from us. We have been accustomed to lavish on them every endearment, every personal service. We worked for them; they were the spur of our life, and our greatest joy was to be able to make them happier, no matter at what sacrifice. And now all this is over. The great veil has dropped between us and them. We tug at its folds, but there it hangs, and not all the commands of all the emperors, not all the offered treasures of the world, can lift its hem. All our ministries are over. We can no more encircle with loving arms the little form. We can no longer keep watch and ward that danger comes not too near; but still we cannot keep out the wish: "Oh, that I could do something for thee; I want to do so much!" Now, in answering that wish, I shall assume that death does not put a stop to love, or dissolve any true relation of love; that those who are behind the veil remember those who are still before; that eyes look on us which we cannot see, and hearts beat for us

which we cannot touch. I said I would assume this, and yet I do not know why I should call it an assumption, for it is a universal belief. It is human. It is natural. Life would be intolerable without it. There never was any great creed that was not based on the idea that the living and the dead are still dear to each other, and that such undying things as love, and friendship, and interest, survive the touch of time, the worm, the grave.

I know the first thought is, "I can do nothing for my dead; they do not need me. They have everything. Their cup is full. Nothing remains for me." Now God has everything, but for all that, we can give Him something which pleases Him. There are things He wants from us. He wants our love, He wants our happiness, He wants to see us better men and women. He says in His Holy Word that He craves the offering of a contrite heart and a meek and lowly spirit. If we can do then for Almighty God services which please Him, how much more can we do for God's creatures?

There is not a man, no matter how rich, how highly placed, who cannot be helped by us. You think a rich man has everything, but he longs for things money cannot buy, nor commands bring about. He wants love, sympathy, friendship, and the poorest man can give him these. So you see that it is false reasoning to say that because the departed are in Paradise, and enjoy all its glories, you can do nothing for them. They are human beings. They have interests on earth. Even Dives in the other world felt the deepest interest in his

still living brothers, and wanted some one sent to warn them. Why, there is a whole crowd of things we can do, words we can say, lives we can live, which will give the departed the greatest joy. Why should it be the angels only who rejoice over the penitent? Souls in Paradise and in Hades are a great deal nearer to us than angels are. Do you not see then how those in Paradise must get happiness and joy from any attempt you make to do good to others, to lessen grief and want and suffering, to improve men, to bring them to greater light, to help them to avoid the very errors into which they themselves had fallen when on earth? It will soften greatly the pangs of separation to look away from the gloom when we sit mourning, and to go to sadder lives and darker homes as a messenger from the one who is dead; to feel that you have been sent on this errand by the dead child, or wife, or husband you so loved, and that they are watching and approving.

So when you sigh and say: What can I do for the dead? remember you can do this. You can go to the sorrow-laden and the grief-stricken and offer them soft words of sympathy. You can do some deed of charity which will lessen a little of the burden of human pain. You can found, if you are rich, some memorial which shall be for ever doing good. You can rescue some child from sin, from ignorance, from cruelty. You can teach the blessed Gospel of Jesus to children. You can help in this way or that way the glorious mission of the Church. You can show forth in your life greater

love, purity, unselfishness, and all these things will give happiness to the spirits in Paradise, for these are the things they love and desire to further.

And there is one thing more you can do for them, you can pray for them. The mother kneels down and prays for her living boy; shall the mere fact of death shut her up from praying just the same way for her boy gone to Paradise: "Oh God, give him new joy, exalt him from glory to glory, grant light to him and yet more light"? Why should I not do this? Am I to be given the foolish reason, "Because Romanists do it?" So they also say the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; shall we therefore stop saying them?

The Bible never says that death fixes all conditions. They cannot be fixed until the judgment, if then; and immense changes may take place in every human soul before that. You deprive yourself, and you deprive those gone before, of much comfort and of much joy if you neglect this great link of communion. Bind yourself and your dead together. They are yours, and you are theirs, now and forever.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE STONES.

DO you ever think of the testimony to the accuracy of the Bible afforded by ancient buildings, long buried under the rubbish of ages, and now being excavated in Assyria, in Egypt, in Jerusalem; tombs with their inscriptions, paintings, inscriptions on monuments, those curious cylinders of clay found at Nineveh, coins, papyrus rolls, and all such things; things which, as you readily see, could not be tampered with as manuscripts of the Scriptures might be by transcribers? The store of these things daily increases as the desire of knowledge in man pushes further his digging and delving in the wrecks of the past. The mine has only just been opened, and we look with confidence in a few more years to the greatest light being thrown on chronological puzzles and difficulties about words and customs which have long worried Bible students.

Of course, in a short paper like this, I can only indicate a few examples of what I mean; but these may induce you to look more deeply into a very interesting subject. You will remember that when

Abraham lost his wife, he bought a burial place for her from Ephraim, the Hittite, and we often read in the Bible of Hittites; for example, "Uriah the Hittite" and "Solomon sold horses to the kings of the Hittites." Nowhere in history could one word be found about the Hittites; and infidels, twenty-five years ago, used to say: "This is a mistake of the Bible; these Hittites are imaginary." Now, as the rolls and the cylinders are deciphered, we are getting much information about the Hittites during their power and their conquests in those far-off days. The Egyptian records speak of them often; in one place it tells of a thousand chariots taken from the Hittites. There is a papyrus in the British Museum which contains a long poem about the battles of Rameses with them, and an Assyrian obelisk contains accounts of them. We know the very year—717 B. C.—when they were wiped out of existence by Sargon, the Assyrian king, and their splendid empire, which had extended far and wide for many centuries, was destroyed. Do you not see what a grand confirmation that is of the Bible statement so long pronounced to be incorrect?

Come down now to the time when the Israelites were in Egypt. We read in the Bible of a king who knew not Joseph, and of the slavish work the Hebrews had to do in building two great treasure cities, Pithom and Rameses; and how the king descended to the mean trick of denying them straw and making them gather reeds to keep the unbaked bricks together. Not many years ago a magnifi-

cently embalmed mummy was found in Egypt, easily known from the inscriptions to be the mummy of Rameses II.; and so well preserved that you can easily trace the resemblance between the embalmed face and the statues and portraits of him all over Egypt. On one inscription his name is connected with one of the cities the Israelites had to build; and now the other city, Pithom, has been found, with treasure chambers in it, and reeds in the brick partitions. There seems but little doubt that this was the king who oppressed the Hebrews, and again Scripture is confirmed by discovery.

Now we come to the Moabite stone. In the year 1868 there was discovered, in the land of Moab, a basalt stone covered with inscriptions. The Arabs who discovered it broke it all to pieces, but the fragments were carefully gathered up and put together, and the stone is in the museum of the Louvre. See now how that stone corroborates Scripture. We read in II. Kings, that Mesha, the King of Moab, paid tribute to the King of Israel of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams, with their wool; but that when Ahab died the King of Moab rebelled against Israel. Now the inscription on the stone, which is in the oldest form of the Hebrew alphabet, reads: "I am Mesha, King of Moab. . . . The King of Israel oppressed Moab, and my god Chemosh was angry with him. His son Ahab succeeded him, and one who said: I will oppress Moab, and my god said go: Go take Nebo against Israel, and I went and took

it." Nowhere else in the world is there a line about Mesha, only on this stone and in the Bible; and do you not see how the short and simple story of that Book is thus accidentally, as we say, confirmed?

The curious libraries of the kings of Nineveh have been found, the books all being clay cylinders, stamped with cuneiform characters; and these books of clay are filled with references to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the events which are related in the Bible, in Chronicles and Kings and Isaiah. For example, there is one inscription: "As for Hezekiah of Judah who had not submitted to my yoke, I besieged and captured forty-six of his strong cities." Could there be a more pointed witness to the truth of the Scripture narrative than this? Infidels have said there was no such person as Belshazzar. A cylinder has been found with a prayer of the King of Babylon for his eldest son Belshazzar.

There are many more examples if I had the space to give them; but certainly these will serve to introduce you to one of the most interesting and striking lines of illustration of the Bible. There are one or two not very expensive books you might get and read, especially one by Prof. Sayce, who is a great authority in such matters.

THE ROGATION DAYS.

ONE of the recollections of my boyhood is being taken by my mother to a sewing society. As I was intended for the ministry, a visit to such societies was considered part of my training. I listened to the respectable matrons pulling to pieces a neighboring clergyman who was guilty of that awful crime of Puseyism, which was at that time a burning question. One lady said: "Do you know, he keeps Rogation days?" I remember the shudder of horror that went through the assembly, and how all thought there was but one step beyond that, and that was Rome. And indeed very few people then had any idea what Rogation days were. In an obscure place in the Prayer Book it was mentioned that there were such things; but it was not until the revised book came into use a few years ago that there was any general knowledge of those days. No service of any kind marked them; but now we have special Lessons for them and special prayers, and the Sunday before Ascension is called in the rubric before these prayers, "Rogation Sunday." Even now,

the Prayer Book does not tell, except in an inferential way, why these days are kept; and comparatively few parishes ever keep them, since they have no especial Collect, Epistle and Gospel. They originated in this way: In the year 452, the district around Vienne, in France, was laid desolate by earthquakes and fires, and the prospect of a good harvest was very doubtful. The Bishop of Vienne, Mamertus by name, appointed the three days before Ascension Day in that year as a solemn fast, when all Christian people were to go in procession, singing litanies, to a church outside the walls, where God was to be asked to pardon the sins of His people, and grant them a good return for the seed just sown.

As far as the Western Church is concerned, I would fix this as the definite time from which we date the kind of prayer we call litany, short supplications with responses, one of the most highly prized and effective parts of our service. This particular form of devotion "took" (to use a modern phrase) very rapidly, so that in the fifth century, St. Cæsar of Arles writes that the Rogation days were "regularly observed by the Church throughout the world." You will find that this was the way in which the greater part of our ritual observances obtained a footing. Some church began some ceremony, or form of devotion. It found favor with the adjoining churches as likely to increase piety. Then neighboring dioceses took it up, and after a while it became general throughout the national Church, and so spread

over the Christian world. The same process is going on now. For example: Many years ago one of my parishioners heard in a church in New York a hymn sung kneeling before the Litany. He told me of it, and how edifying he found it, and I introduced it into the service. No other western parish then had it, but it spread very rapidly, and now is quite general. Witness also the very rapid spread of the 'Three Hours' devotion for Good Friday. When the Prayer Book is revised at the end of another century, provision will undoubtedly be made for that service.

But to return to the Rogation days. They are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension; and as far as our Communion is concerned, their object is to ask God to bless the labors of the husbandman, and to grant such seasonable weather that we may gather in the fruits of the earth. The Litany ought to be said on all these days, in memory of the origin of these rogations or petitions, for the word comes from the Latin, *rogare*, to petition. We have no processions outside the churches on these days, as far as I know, but they are quite common abroad. I happened to be travelling through Bavaria once on the Rogation days, and it was very pleasant, as the train passed from village to village, to see, marching along the newly-sown fields, processions headed by the priest, and cross, and choir, singing litanies. In England, from very ancient days, the parishioners walked around the bounds of the parish, on the Rogations, saying the Litany and

the 103d and 104th Psalms; and you can find now in very many parishes, crosses which mark where the processions stopped, and the curate explained what they were doing, and offered suitable prayers.

So, go to church on the Rogation days; or if you can not, pray at home that the harvest may be good, and that the ground may bring forth abundantly. Do not be kept from such prayers by the statement that all nature is governed by laws, and that ground will only produce and fruit ripen according to the rain and sun, and richness of the earth, and labor bestowed on it. We all know that, and we would not plant a seed unless we were sure that great laws were back of us which would ensure its ripening with proper care. We would none of us be silly enough to pray for rain in Arizona, for example, during the months when rain never falls. But while we know all about law, we also know that even with our feeble wills we can counteract law. I can make a ball fly up, when the law of gravity is that it shall fly down; and if I can do such things, what cannot God do? He may help the harvest in a thousand ways of which we are ignorant, and law exist all the same, and we are right in praying for any good thing.

ASCENSION DAY.

YOU will often hear people call Maundy Thursday Holy Thursday, but it is a great mistake. Holy Thursday is the common name for Ascension Day; and just as there is one Friday particularly good, so is there one Thursday particularly holy, and that is the Thursday when our Lord withdrew His visible presence from this world; we must not say "left this world," for as He says, wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them. He is before us in the person of the poor and the needy. He is really and truly present with us and for us in the Eucharist, so that He is just as much connected with the world as when He parted with His disciples, only we see Him not. It is impossible to tell just when Ascension Day took its place in the sacred calendar; both St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom have sermons on it, showing that in their time it was generally observed; and our own common sense tells us that the early Christians would not have been likely to forget, or to celebrate with scant honor, the last day our Lord passed with them.

There are four festivals which stand far before any of the others: Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsunday; and Ascension is one of the very few days in our Prayer Book which has an octave, that is, a week of special services, marked by a preface in the Communion Office. It is a day when every Churchman ought to make a point of going to church to celebrate the proudest event in the history of man; the day when human nature reached its greatest glory, being taken by our Lord into the other world, and in His person placed on the throne of heaven; so that a Man rules the whole creation, a Man who is also God.

We commonly say our Lord went up from the top of Olivet, but the Scripture does not say so. On the contrary, it says: "He led them out as far as Bethany," which is nearly a mile from what is known as Mt. Olivet; and again it says in Acts, that after the Ascension, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey, that is, a mile. This shows conclusively that it could not have been that summit which directly overhangs the city, and on which St. Helena built a church. The olive woods around Bethany where our Lord passed so much time with dear friends, was a much likelier place for His leave-taking than the glare and publicity of what we call the Mount of Olives, which can be seen from every house in Jerusalem, and which seems near enough, in that clear air, to reach with a stone from the city wall. The Turks have a mosque there, and they show

the place from which our Lord ascended, which is, of course, a pious fraud.

We also commonly say, our Lord went up. Children may say that, but intelligent men must know that there is neither up nor down in this universe; that the same ether and stars are all around the world; and that if we were carried to the moon, the world would look to us just as the moon does now. The Scripture does not mean by "up" that our Lord went travelling on from star to star until He got to some highest point; but just that He passed out of sight, a cloud shutting Him out from view, passed into that inner and unseen universe where He now dwells. For the proof that there is an unseen universe close to this, out of which this came, and into which it is passing, I commend you to a scientific treatise called "The Unseen Universe." I have not the space to discuss that here.

But, some will say, our Lord must have gone very far away; for St. Stephen looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw it opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Yes, but why suppose the saint looked so far away? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that his spiritual sight was so sharpened, as is very often the case with dying persons, that it pierced the veil which hides the other world from us, and he had a glimpse of the unseen, not so far off, but so different? There is no need to bring in a distant view, as if St. Stephen's material eyes had been endowed with telescopic power. We can see very well (the proofs are

very abundant about sleep-walking people) without ever opening our material eyes, and so can we hear. St. Paul heard the words our Lord uttered out of the unseen world, on that memorable day before Damascus, while those around him heard only sounds.

Do you ask what we know about this world into which our Lord has withdrawn? The Scripture figures about it—pearly gates, golden streets, seas of glass, and so on—convey merely the impression that human words are inadequate to describe its glory. They give no definite idea. One sentence of our Lord about it is, however, quite plain. He says it is a place of many mansions; which must mean a place with different planes, different states, different spheres, so that the conditions in that world are as varying as in this. How could it be otherwise? Every hour hundreds of spirits are pouring into it from this side, all different, no more fitted to be together there than here. Each one must go to his appropriate place; and there is ever progress and ever evolution, and (blessed comfort) our Lord Himself prepares the place for His children, and leads them to it at their death.

CHARACTER THE SOURCE OF TRUE CHURCH PROGRESS.

WHEN we want to judge of the outcome or the utility of any society or organization among men, we do not, as a rule, go to the constitution and by-laws of the society to find out what its purposes are. We ought to do that. It is only fair that we should, but we do not. We make up our judgment from the members, from their walk and conversation. If we see them, as a general thing, the better for belonging to the society in which they are so prominent, we are apt to form a good opinion of the society; but if we see no improvement we are likely to conclude that the society does not accomplish its purpose. Of course the published principles of the society are very greatly taken into account. When we know an association to be called, "The Jolly Good Fellows," and its open purpose to be the cultivation of conviviality, we do not expect to find its members models of temperance and quiet living. When, however, an organization proclaims loudly that it has for its aim and object the improvement of

character, the raising the tone of daily life, and when we see the rank and file of that society not showing the least improvement in character, and content with a very low standard of daily life, we have a certain right to say: I do not care to know much about the laws of that society; whatever they are, the members are not governed by them at all, and their membership has not improved them in any way. Theoretically, I repeat, this is not what we ought to do; practically, it is always done, and neither you nor I can change it.

Now the same mode of treatment is applied to that great society to which we belong, the Church of Christ. The Church, of course, rests upon the life of Christ as laid down in the Word of God. The teachings of the Lord Jesus are proclaimed to be its teachings. It exists to improve humanity; to be the channel by which divine grace is conveyed to men, so that they may not have to fight unaided, and therefore in vain, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Its reason of being is to draw men nearer to God, and to lessen the selfishness human beings ordinarily display. These principles of the Church are found in the Bible, and are set forth in creeds, confessions, and liturgies; but as a general thing, men do not investigate these documents, but form their judgment of the Church from the Church men and women. They will not even read history and see what splendid specimens of men and women the Church has produced; but make up their minds from the Christians around them, whom they meet every day in business and in society. Now I repeat

that this is not quite fair; but we will have to take things as we find them, and recognize that the influence of the Church upon the world will be determined, not so much by getting men to investigate its claims, as by what they see of the character and life of its adherents. I might set forth in the most lucid and eloquent way the great doctrines of Christianity; I might picture my Redeemer's life and sacrifice in the most moving terms; I might describe the joys of heaven and the pains of hell as never man did before me; it would not produce half the effect upon outsiders that would be produced by the sight of a church full of men and women really practising love, meekness, gentleness, faith, joy, and every other form of unselfishness; doing business in the fear of God; mingling in unity with a view to mutual help and ennoblement; enjoying without excess and without sin, the joyousness of life, ever bearing in mind their sonship to God and their brothership to men; striving to carry out as far as erring men can carry out, the model set them in the life of Jesus.

Since this is so, what a tremendous responsibility falls upon every Church member! His great object must be, not the getting himself into heaven, or just shaving the gate of hell; but the so living that men may be led, seeing his unselfish and uplifting life, to conclude, "I, too, will try that way. It helps all those people who are of the same clay that I am, surely it will help me." You think that the reason why the Church does not win more people is because she is so hampered by the attacks

of infidels and the obstinacy of error and ignorance; but I tell you that while these all may be pebbles which impede the smooth flow of the river, the great rock which chokes the water, makes it foam and eddy, and bars navigation, is the ordinary life of the ordinary Christian.

Men have often said to me: "I remain outside the Church, not because the doctrines are often so incomprehensible; not because of any great sin which I am unwilling to give up; not because I do not want to serve God; but because I doubt, judging from what I know of the Church people around me, whether it would be of any benefit to me to take the Church vows." What answer can you make to this, unless you can instantly point to many and many a life known to the objector, which gives evidence of the hallowing effect of Christianity, and which shows the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit? The moment the Church life sinks so low that we must remain dumb when we are asked to show in the world around us people who are the better for the Church and for Christ, that moment marks the end of the Church as a factor in the elevation of the race. But such a moment has never struck, even in the darkest hours of the Church's history. There always has been, and there are now, numberless examples of what the following of Christ could do for men. The parish that is without them is a disgrace to its Lord. Remember, then, that if you want the Church to spread, you, yourself, must live your part of the true Christian life.

MEANING OF WHITSUNDAY.

IN our Prayer Book, Whitsunday is written as one word, except in the Octave, when we find Whitsun-week. This rather confuses the derivation, but I will give you your choice of three, for doctors disagree as to which is the right one. Some contend that the word ought to be Whitsunday, and the Whitsun is got in this way: Pentecost, in German, *Pfingsten*; old German, *Whingsten*; old English, Whitsun; or you may prefer White Sunday, so-called from the robes of the candidates for Baptism, Whitsunday having been anciently a great day for baptizing; or you may incline to Wit-Sunday, as marking the day on which the "wit," or wisdom of the spirit was given to man. This last one is very taking. In the Roman Church it is called Pentecost, and the Sundays which we call Sundays after Trinity, are called Sundays after Pentecost.

But no matter how you get the word, the day commemorates the coming of divine wisdom into the hearts and lives of the Apostles of Christ, which took place when they were all together in a

room on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost. A strong wind shook the room, a flamelike tongue (a lambent flame) hovered over each head, and every one there was filled with a sense of holy inspiration, and they began to speak with other tongues, just as the Holy Spirit guided them to do. This being entirely a supernatural occurrence, could only be perfectly explained by a supernatural person; and all that I can do will be to tell you what some of it means to me. The wind and the flame seem appropriate marks to me of the coming of a new time, the beginning of a new life, the first step on the splendid ladder of liberty, which even yet is not half mounted. Such an event called for some striking outward sign. When such events occur in a nation's history there are salutes from a hundred guns; there are tempests of applause; there is great excitement. So when this great event happened in the kingdom of God, He marked it by awful signs of His own, so that those who saw it never could forget it, and never could confuse the inspiration of genius with that inspiration.

There is an inspiration of genius. There were clever men in Moses' flock who drew plans for the decoration of the tabernacle. The Bible says they were inspired. It says Samson was inspired with courage when he met and slew thirty men at Ashkelon. It says David was an inspired player, and the same thing can be said now. It was an inspiration that flashed into Newton's mind the law of gravitation. The great poets are inspired. Raphael painted by inspiration. This peculiar

gift of God distinguishes the genius from the ordinary man. Study and wealth and place could never teach men such things. They are inspired to do them. Then there are higher kinds of inspiration, and this recorded here is the highest of all, the inspiration of men of little education and narrow Jew minds with the great plan of salvation, the Gospel of Christ; inspiring them to tell it everywhere, to tell it right, to tell it convincingly, to tell it so that generation after generation of men could take it to their hearts, and themselves catch this same inspiring spirit which will enable them to rise out of the dust of appetite and sin, into a clearer air of high resolve and noble achievement. Certainly the day which the Holy Spirit of God chose that He might breathe Himself in this glorious way into the hearts of men, might well have been marked out by those great symbols of inspiration—wind, blowing now gently, now firmly, as the Spirit does, invisible as the Spirit is; and fire which burns and tries and lights up in the material world, as the Spirit does in the immaterial.

But the tongues with which it is said they spake, what does that mean? Now if I should undertake to tell you all that the old Fathers and the young fathers have imagined it meant, this five-minute talk would have to be stretched into a five-month talk, and you would not know much more at the end than you know now. I am inclined to think that you and I had better take the common sense view of it, that it means just what it says; that the men who were in that

room went out in the street and preached, and that either every man who heard them, understood what they said, or that they spake, some one, some another, language, so that groups recognizing their own language, soon gathered around the man who was speaking it, and were able, with that pleasure a man in a strange land always feels at hearing his own tongue, to follow the speaker. I have never been able to decide for myself whether the miracle was in the hearers or the speakers.

There is not one word in Scripture to tell us whether this gift was a lasting one or not. In the account of the labors of the Apostles, it is never said they made use of it. As they worked in regions where Greek was the general language, they did not much need it. But however that may be, this Whitsunday preaching was a wonderful sign that all men are one in the speech and tongue of Jesus Christ.

THE EMBER DAYS.

WHAT do Ember Days mean, and what should we do on them?

There are four sets of Ember Days, occurring on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday in Lent, after Whitsunday, after Sept. 14th, and after Dec. 13th, corresponding to spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The name "Ember" is probably a corrupted form of the Latin words, *Quatuor Tempora*, the four seasons. This in German was shortened into *Quatember*, and in English into Ember. It means the four times in the year when Churchmen are to fast and pray for God's blessing on that particular season of the year. These times began to be fully observed in Italy about the 5th century, and not until much later outside of that country. They do not exist at all in the calendar of the Eastern Church. In the whole Western Church, however, they have gradually come to be the stated times for the ordaining of priests and deacons, and it is this feature on which we now lay particular stress in the keeping of the Ember Days. If you look in your

Prayer Book you will see in the Occasional Prayers, two very beautiful prayers which are to be used in the "weeks preceding the stated times of ordination," meaning the Ember times. Unless your priest was careless, or you yourself were paying little attention, you must often have heard these prayers on the four Sundays in the year which follow or precede the Ember days; and if there is a daily service in your parish, and you go to it, on the Ember days themselves.

It does not follow that only at those times can priests and deacons be ordained, for there is no morning in the year when it could not be done; but there are stated times—stated so that the whole Church may be praying together that God's blessing may so guide the Bishops and pastors of the flock that they may not lay hands suddenly (that is, without due consideration) on any man, but may faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the Church; and also to pray that God's grace and benediction may be given to those ordained, that both by their life and doctrine they may show forth God's glory and set forward the salvation of all men. It is a very grand and inspiring thought that at certain four times in the year in every Episcopal and Roman Catholic church, the priest and the people are putting up common supplications for those who are to take on themselves the trials, the duties, the joys, of the sacred ministry. Trials, because the scanty salaries, the small effect of all their labors, the huge mountains of sin ever confronting

them, are trials; duties, for what duty can be so weighty and so absorbing as the care of souls; and joys, because there is no higher, nobler, purer joy than that of being useful, of having one's whole life consecrated to the bettering the life of your fellows, and being the channels by which God has chosen to convey sacramental grace and help to the faithful.

Have you ever thought at the Ember times, of your especial connection with them, and that you were called upon to add your voice to the prayer for those to be ordained; and that you were bound up in the great net of the Apostolic Succession, Bishop after Bishop, priest after priest, succeeding one another as Ember days succeed to Ember days? Lay people in the American Church are very apt to forget how closely they are connected with every ordination that takes place. You think it is an affair which only concerns Bishops and priests, but you are very much mistaken. No Bishop, priest, or deacon, can be brought to ordination in our Church without laymen playing a most important part in it. Among the papers which it is absolutely necessary for a young man wishing to be ordained deacon to present to the Bishop, is a certificate from the vestry of his parish, all laymen, and from the Standing Committee, composed of clergymen and laymen. When a deacon wishes to be a priest, he again must have the lay signatures of the Standing Committee, and before a Bishop can be consecrated, Standing Committees, equally with his peers, must consent to it.

You see then how intimately the lay element is bound up with the Ember days; and it ought to make you very careful, in the first place, what vestrymen you elect, since they may at any time be called upon to recommend some one for Holy Orders; and in the second place, to make you very earnest in your prayers for the guidance of your Bishop in choosing men, for ultimately the choice rests with him and he does not pretend to be infallible, and also for the candidate that he may not lightly and unadvisedly take on himself the awful responsibilities of the priesthood. Unless a man loves his priestly office, not for worldly advantage, or for the social rank it gives him, but for the opportunities it offers for doing good to men, I can imagine no drearier life than his must be. I once knew a priest who had taken Orders to please his father and mother, and for certain temporal advantages, and he told me he felt like a convict with a ball and chain around his leg. He was not a hypocrite, and he knew that he was in a false position, but he had not the courage to leave it, and lived and died an unhappy and discontented man.

Pray for your Bishop, and for all the clergy, but especially for your own parish priest, not only on Ember days, but on all days. No men need prayer more and crave it more, and none will be more grateful for it.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY.

ANYONE who is not an expert theologian hesitates in regard to writing anything about the great doctrine of the Trinity, for fear of a hue and cry being raised against him that he is a Sabellian or a Monophysite, or a Monothelite, or something of the sort. Do you ask me to explain those big words? I do not think it best to do so, for fear you might think you were one; just as young medical students when they read about diseases, are very apt to imagine they have all the symptoms themselves. Of course if you should happen to be one of those things you could not be burned or choked for it as your ancestors were, but you would have to hear a great deal of bad language about yourself. I hope that you are, as I am, a good Orthodox Trinitarian, and say with all your heart your Litany and your *Glorias*, and indulge in no useless speculations. I came to this conclusion long ago.

The whole Church once investigated the Scripture doctrine of the nature of God to its very depths; years were spent on it. The noblest minds

in the Christian Church gave it the whole wealth of their intellect. Great councils of the Church, in which the whole Christian world was either represented, or which that world afterward accepted, pronounced upon it. Nothing new in the way of proof can possibly now be said about it, and I am perfectly willing and glad to abide by their decisions. All that they could do was to state what the Apostles and Evangelists had written, and the conviction of the early Christians as to the meaning of what they said. They could not explain the doctrine, for the simple reason that man cannot explain God. A horse can understand certain traits about humanity, that man is master, that he is gentle or cruel, that he must look to him for food, shelter, etc.; but how little a horse can understand of that wonderful thing, the body, the soul, the spirit of man. So I, a man, being made in the image of God, can understand, to some degree, some of His attributes, His power, His glory, His fatherly care, His sympathy; but how little I know of the whole awful being of God, what He is, His nature, His essence. All that you or I can do is to accept the statements of God's Word as interpreted by God's Church from the earliest ages, and believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons in one Godhead, feeling all the while that we are expressing ourselves only in the best possible words human skill could furnish for the statement of unfathomable things, and with very great

tolerance for those who feel they must use other terms in speaking about God.

But while we may not be able to understand fully the nature of God, there are many thoughts and many illustrations which are very useful in helping us to understand it better than we do. Let us talk about them a little. Do not let the argument that a Holy Trinity implies something contrary to reason have the least effect upon you. Very few thoughts will show you that the doctrine of a Holy Unity is not a bit more reasonable. Unitarians say of God that He is omnipresent. Can you comprehend a Deity being in all places at the same time, omniscient? Is it at all in the power of your mind to understand a person knowing the past, the present, and the future all at once? So you see that the idea of God in one Person is not one whit easier to comprehend than the idea of God in three Persons. It is not very difficult for you to grasp the idea of God your Father, that He is not a cold, cruel destiny, wielding a sceptre of changeless purpose, but a dear parent who loves His children and does all that He can do (limiting Himself as He has by granting them free-will) to make them good, obedient, and therefore happy. But when we try to think of this God we must think of Him as a man, because our minds can only think of an intelligent being in that way. You can, as the Scripture writers often do, use figures, a sword coming out of His mouth, and rays out of His hand; but you feel that all that

is figurative, and your mind will run back to the idea of a man of awful power and glory.

Now just think how admirably the doctrine of God the Son born of the Virgin, fits in with that necessity of human thought. In the light of the Trinity you raise your eyes to the figure of your dear Lord clothed with this humanity, but perfect God, your Brother and your Redeemer. Then when the whisper thrills through your soul, "Do this!" "Do not do that!" you cry to yourself, "It is the inspiring Spirit of God," and so in the light of the Trinity again you kneel before God the Spirit. You will find that these three thoughts of God as the Father, as the Man, as the indwelling Spirit, and yet one invisible God, who cannot be lessened, and who cannot share His place with another, are really the exhaustive thoughts we men can have about God.

You will find in your own nature a wonderful illustration of the three in one. You must recognize in yourself the physical man, living the animal life, the intellectual man, exploring the universe and day by day making greater progress, and the man of feeling who loves, who hates, who sympathizes; and yet all these co-exist in the same man, three and yet one. Sometimes one of these persons acts and sometimes another, but no one can act without the other two. You see how they are separated, and you see how they are interwoven; so is it with the persons of the Godhead.

ST. LUKE.

LET us talk a little about St. Luke. A great many people always consider him one of the Apostles, but he was not, and it is not even certain that he was one of the seventy disciples. Indeed, it seems most probable that he was one of St. Paul's converts, and he certainly was his constant and affectionate companion. He implies that he was not an eye witness of Jesus' life, but that he "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." The proper title for him is "Evangelist," which means a writer or letter of the evangel, or Gospel, or good tidings. He also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Do you ask how we know one man wrote both? Why, from the same reasons that we know Dickens wrote both the Curiosity Shop and Pickwick Papers; because the style, the words chosen, the tone, is the same. A Greek scholar easily concludes that one man wrote the two books, from the very first ascribed to St. Luke. He was brought up a doctor, and St. Paul calls him, in one place "the beloved physician;" but that of itself would not prove him to have been any

higher in station than the Apostles, for in those times many doctors were slaves; but it is evident from his writings that he had been more carefully educated than St. Peter or St. John. Tradition says that he was a painter, and I have seen one or two pictures he is said to have painted. If his doctoring was no better than his painting, his patients were to be pitied. He is not mentioned many times in the sacred narrative, but just the few times that his name occurs tell us more about him and show up his character better than a big book would, stuffed full of commonplaces. An artist can, with a few strokes of the brush, put before you a truer conception of a face than a tyro laboring for weeks could ever do.

Let us notice these two or three little points, and see how grand a man they depict, and how much we can learn from him and are indebted to him, entirely independent of the priceless debt we owe him in having left us such treasures in his books. Once St. Paul, writing to his pupil and adopted son, St. Timothy, laments his loneliness, and speaks of some who had gone away, and he adds the words: "Only Luke is with me." Now we immediately judge from that, St. Luke to have been a fearless and steadfast man. He was not afraid of sharing St. Paul's imprisonment; he was not afraid of Roman dungeons, and all the trials which menaced Christians then when they were hated and despised, and considered just what we consider anarchists now, as enemies to the State. He stuck by his friend, and that is the kind of

friend we want. A real friend is one who, no matter whether we are in jail or out of jail, still holds our hands and still remains by our side.

Then in his letter to the Colossians St. Paul calls St. Luke "the beloved physician." Now of course he may be thinking of his own debt of gratitude to St. Luke. St. Paul, you know, was a man in quite delicate health; and it was a great comfort to him to have always near him a skilled doctor like St. Luke. It was enough to make him love him. This epithet, however, was one which St. Paul evidently knew those to whom he was writing would understand when he called his doctor "beloved." That was the way, doubtless, in which people generally spoke of him; and is there any body who is more loved in a family than a truly sympathetic and competent doctor? I have had, as president of a large hospital, a great deal to do with doctors; and while they have weaknesses (no more than priests have), I wish to say that I have never found any body of men more unselfish and more eager to help humanity. A doctor does more charitable work, and gives more time to the poor than any other man; and I have been often greatly touched to see the hours on hours of the most exhausting labor which a doctor, whose time was gold, would give to some poor colored girl who could not pay a cent. Do not sneer, as the devil did when speaking about Job, and say: "He does it to get more skill, and because it is an interesting case." He does it nine times out of ten because he wishes to relieve suffering, and that is a trait in

which he draws very near his Lord. That St. Luke had the pet name of "the beloved physician" speaks volumes for him, and shows him to have been a man of sympathy and skill, a loving, kind-hearted, and genial doctor; and there are no better citizens and companions than that sort of physicians.

But there is still another hint about St. Luke which still more strongly brings out his portrait. The second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Titus and Luke (St. Paul, remember, rarely wrote, his eyes were weak, and he generally dictated), and St. Paul, speaking of Titus, speaks of his companion as "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout the churches." Now I have read a great many laudatory articles about men, filling columns; but I do not think that if St. Paul had written such an article, he could have said more than in those few words. If I heard that all the churches praised a clergyman, I should conclude that he had eloquence, tact, sincerity, faith, logical ability, zeal, and adaptation; and when you give those to the qualities I have already mentioned, courage, steadfastness, sympathy and skill, you have about as good a pattern of a man as can be turned out. Church hospitals are often and very properly called after him.

May the diseases of our souls, as the Collect says, be healed by the wholesome medicine of St. Luke's doctrine.

ALL ANGELS.

THE feast of St. Michael and All Angels is with us now, and it is the right time to talk a little about the holy angels. Even if we did not find a word in Scripture about intelligent beings between God and man, our own reason would lead us to conclude that there were such beings. As we look from ourselves down the line we see a wonderful succession of living creatures, decreasing gradually in intelligence, until a simple cell of life is reached; and we would reason from that, that also upward, in an ever-increasing mental and spiritual expansion, must rise the chain of glorious existences toward the unapproachable majesty of God. The Christian doctrine of evolution has brought out a more magnificent conception of the whole universe of God than was ever before imagined.

But wholly apart from logical conclusions, we believers in the revealed Word of God, find stated there, in the clearest and most distinct terms, not only the existence of angels, but revelations as to their nature, their functions, their connection with

us. We must not conclude that because they have appeared in human form to men, therefore they were once men. They are obliged to take that form when visible to us, because any other form is repulsive and would only shock us. Two or three times in Scripture spiritual beings are described to us with animal parts; head of an ox, six wings, eyes within and without, and we can make nothing of such descriptions. Angels have their own form, but we do not know what it is; nor could our mortal eyes probably bear to look upon it.

It is very absurd to have children sing, "I want to be an angel," for we men want to be raised from the dead with the spiritual body which belongs to glorified humanity, and in the next world we want to be glorified men and women. Our dear Lord did not "take on Himself the nature of angels," but the nature of men; and we are His brethren, and we want to be, as Scripture says, "like Him."

And now let us see what the Holy Scriptures tell us about angels. I will not give texts, for they would take up too much room; but I will try not to state anything for which there is not Scripture warrant. While angels are not men, the difference between them and us is not one of kind, but one of degree. They are not hampered with flesh as we are, but they possess the same attributes that we do, truth, faith, love, etc. As they are created beings their nature is finite, and therefore subject to temptation; and it is distinctly told us that

angels have fallen before temptation, have "left their first estate" and are now "angels of the devil." Nothing is told us as to how they fell; and all the common notions about that, and much else about angels, come from Milton's "Paradise Lost," a book that has greatly confused and corrupted our ideas of the whole unseen world. You must take care to separate between its imaginings and the guarded statements of Scripture. Not much is said in the Bible about the office of the angels in the heavenly world. It seems to be one of perpetual adoration and praise of God; and painters have loved to picture their glorious ranks with white wings waving, and beautiful faces aglow with reverence. It is all right to think of the great angelic company in this way, but remember it is imagination, not doctrine.

Very clear statements are made in Scripture regarding the connection of angels with nature; not the manner of the connection is told us, but the simple fact. We read of an angel who has power over fire, and of others who hold the winds of the earth. An angel's descent caused the earthquake at our Lord's tomb; an angel smites Herod and annihilates the armies of Assyria; and one was seen by David with outstretched hands poised over Jerusalem, ready to send in the plague if so commanded. The rabbis carried this idea to the most absurd lengths, and taught that every disease had its angel; but I have stated only the words of the Bible about the link between the spirits of the air and the world of nature. It is in

the connection of angels with men that we are chiefly interested, and both Old and New Testaments have much to say about that. Often did they guide Abraham and Jacob and Lot and other patriarchs; and you will remember how the eyes of Elisha's servant were opened, so that he saw a whole array of them camping around the little town where his master dwelt. They announced the birth of Christ; when He was hungry after His temptation they came and gave Him food; and they did the same in the garden at the agony. They told men of His resurrection and ascension. It is expressly said that angels are all "ministering spirits sent forth from God to do service for us who are heirs of salvation;" and from these words and from our Lord's own statement, that the angels of children stand very near God's throne, it has always been a pious belief in the Church that every person has his own guardian spirit. The Church of Rome makes this a doctrine; our Church does not, but she thoroughly allows the belief, and it has been and is held by her most spiritually minded children. Our Church teaches in the Collect for All Angels' Day, that angels "succor and defend us on earth;" and in the *Sanctus*, when we say at every Communion, "with angels and archangels and all the glorious company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy glorious name," she teaches us that a great company of spirits invisible is present and worshipping with us. When we are penitent, angels rejoice over us, and when we die, angels carry us, as they carried Lazarus, into Paradise.

Angels also are to take a great part in the judgment. We are forbidden expressly to worship them, but we ought to think much about them and bless God for their aid and sympathy. Men may desert us, but Christ and the holy angels never will.

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE.

THE 28th of October is the festival of St. Simon and St. Jude. Who was Simon and who was Jude, and why are they put together? There were two Simons among the twelve Apostles; Simon Peter, and this Simon who is generally distinguished by the title, "the Cananite," or "Zelotes." Our Bible spells the word, "Canaanite," which would lead one to think that it means he came from Canaan; but the revised version more correctly spells it "Cananite," and then a scholar knows immediately that it is the same word as "Zelotes," one being the Chaldee, and the other, the Greek, for "Zealot;" and showing that Simon was a member of the sect of Zealots, a Jewish sect in our Lord's time, noted for its fanatical patriotism.

There are half a dozen Simons, you will remember, in the New Testament, besides these two Apostles: Simon Magus, Simon the Tanner, Simon the Leper, Simon of Cyrene, Simon, the father of Judas Iscariot, and Simon the Pharisee. I was well aware of all the difficulties (too long to discuss here) about his family and his relation to

our Lord, but it seems quite probable that he was the son of Alphæus or Cleopas (the same man), and our Lord's cousin. We do not know one single thing about him from Scripture, except that he belonged to the Zealots, and they were all fanatics. It shows how our Lord used all kinds of men. We often laugh at fanatics, but a great deal of the fine work of the world has been done by them. If it had not been for fanatics, this would still be a land of slavery, nor would the frightful evil of drink ever have been so impressed on the public mind. A fanatic, trained as Simon was by our Lord, must have been a wonderfully ardent, enthusiastic man who had the courage of his convictions. A fanatic who has learned some wisdom is one of the most valuable helpers you can have in any cause.

There were also two Judes or Judases among the Apostles: the infamous Judas Iscariot, and this one who had two other names, Lebbæus and Thaddæus; Lebbæus probably referring to Lebba, the town of his birth, and Thaddæus only another form of Judas, both coming from the same Hebrew word, "to praise." There is very little probability that this Judas was the one who wrote the Epistle of St. Jude. Of that Jude we know very little, except that he was the brother of James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, and perhaps our Lord's cousin. The word "brother" was used among the Jews, as it is now in Eastern communities, to denote a far wider relationship—cousins and brothers-in-law, and nephews. You will see the phrase in Scripture, "our Lord's brother," and you are at liberty, if

you choose, to think that these were actual brothers of our dear Lord; but the whole Church has always piously thought that the Blessed Virgin had but one child, and that these were cousins, the sons of the Virgin's sister, or nephews of Joseph. It is perfectly justifiable to think this, and suits our feelings better.

The reason why St. Simon and St. Jude are put together is perhaps the idea, even now held by many, that they were both sons of Alphæus, and therefore as brothers should go together; but that reason would not apply to SS. Philip and James, who are also put together on one day. A perfectly satisfactory reason is that these two cases of two Apostles together were so arranged on purpose to recall to us the fact that they were sent out, two and two, for the great work of preaching the Gospel. How lonely they would have been otherwise. How considerate of our Lord thus to plan it. Missions ought ever to be conducted in the same way, in community, several together, whether men or women. The modern plan of sending families has never appealed very strongly to the writer of this paper. He thinks the preachers of the cross in heathen lands should entirely give up all American ideas of life; and in dress, in food, in habits, in houses, conform to the people among whom they are to live. They might be most unpleasant, and utterly preclude the taking of families, but in his opinion it would be much more effective. It must have gone against the grain for the early missionaries from Rome to leave all the

elegancies of Roman life and go out among the barbarian tribes in Gaul and Germany, and live as they did; but the love of Christ constrained them to do it, and so they made those wonderful conversions. I recognize the noble and devoted work of our missionaries; it is only a question with me whether we are working in the best way.

To come back to SS. Simon and Jude, as I said, we know nothing of either, but their names. Here are two men who took leading parts in the first preaching of the Gospel, men who were chosen for the best reasons out of other men, by our Lord Himself; and yet they are plunged in perfect obscurity, while we know even the baby words of fourth and fifth-rate generals and base-ball players. Nor are their cases peculiar. Newman says in one of his sermons that we do not know who first planted corn, or who first tamed a horse; and yet what two things have more greatly benefitted man? Who first imagined that the downy seed substance of a certain plant could be woven into clothes? And yet that idea revolutionized dress, and was so prolific a one, that the whole world, if his name were known, would set apart a day to his memory. How this shows that not those about whom trumpets are blown and volumes written, are the greatest benefactors of their race; that often in secret and silence, as God works, are the most tremendous results accomplished. However, fame, in the great majority of cases, soon passes; but these names are written forever in the book of God. What matter if human history ignores them?

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

ALL Saints' Day, Nov. 1st, is one of the most glorious festivals in the Church year. Next to the four great feasts, it has always come the closest to my heart. It came into prominence in the Western Church about the beginning of the 7th century, when Pope Boniface IV. conceived the grand idea of turning the Pantheon, a noble building still standing in Rome, built in honor of all the heathen gods, into a Christian church, consecrated to the honor of all the Christian saints, the Blessed Virgin at the head. He set apart Nov. 1st as a day for their especial commemoration; and never from that time in that church have they ceased to be honored, and the influence of that festival has spread over the whole Western Church. The Eastern Church observes the same thing on a different day.

The word "saint" has changed its meaning several times. In the New Testament, generally, it merely means the whole body of Christians, good and bad together. St. Paul writes to the "saints at Ephesus," meaning the whole congregation; and

we read of "collections for the saints" and of "saluting the saints." Then in Revelation St. John evidently means by the word, the martyrs, and in that sense he calls Jesus "King of the saints." This was the meaning long attached to the word in the Church, but gradually it became the designation of every person remarkable for holiness, no matter whether he had suffered martyrdom or not; and it is in that sense we always use the word now. We mean by "saint" a person of such spirituality, such unselfishness, such pure and holy life, that he or she stands out pre-eminent from the crowd of the ordinary servants of God.

The Church of Rome has a process for making saints, and formally putting them in the kalendar; but it is too long to describe here. Our Church has no such form, but it would not be a bad idea to have it declared by some authorized body that on account of the eminent usefulness and holiness of such a man or woman, it was allowable to commemorate those on a certain fixed day. We have days to keep in memory of Washington and Lincoln; there is no reason why we should not have days to freshen the recollections of some of our eminent Church people whose works and whose example have been an inspiration to thousands, both in their lives and after their deaths. We will probably come to that. We are not at all likely to fall into the common Roman error of forgetting our Lord in a devotion to some favorite saint. Any one who has travelled much abroad must have noticed that, whatever Roman writers may say in

regard to their teaching as against any such doctrine, the practice of the common people is surely in that direction.

It is a glorious picture, that which opens before us when we think of the great army of the saints, and it is such a comforting thought. You see so many half-and-half Christians, so many eaten up with selfishness, so many falling by the way, so much falseness and sin staining the Church everywhere, that it does one immense good to turn away from it all, and think of the thousands on thousands now at rest who lived in this same Church such lives of holiness, devotion to others, sublime faith, dauntless courage, that men agreed without a word of dissent to call them saints. Out of the Church constantly that army is reinforced; and whatever you may, on superficial grounds, think of the Church, it has ever been and is now, the nursery of the highest virtues. If the Church could show such products all along the ages, why not now? Surely she is a thousand times purer than she was some centuries ago, and yet never did saints fail even in her darkest days. It is just so now; everywhere and in every village there are choice souls all on fire with love to God, all absorbed in the good of men, who are getting ready for sainthood. They do not think so, for they are not pluming themselves on their holiness, but are constantly bewailing their imperfections; but God knows who they are, and their own Lord is getting their places ready. They are the salt of the Church and of the earth.

But you will say: "I never can be one." Why not? The saints were of the same clay that you are. They had the same passions you have, and when we look into their lives we find that they fell into the same mistakes and sins which marked other people. They were no peculiar creations, but they made the object of their lives the service of God and of their fellow-men; and gradually that intense passion swallowed up their lower natures and took possession of their lives, so that they only lived for that. It is possible, if you have the courage, and will prayerfully stick to the struggle, for you to do the same. The saints were from all stations of life; some were kings and queens, St. Elizabeth, St. Louis, St. Margaret; some were soldiers, St. Alban, St. Martin, St. Sebastian; some were sweet young girls, St. Lucy, St. Cecilia; some were Bishops, Chrysostom, Cyprian; some were servants, like the English Sarah Martin, or the French woman who founded the Little Sisters of the Poor. It makes no difference to God, for holiness is a great republic. I do not allow myself on All Saints' Day to include in my thanksgiving only the saints who were in the Church. I thank God then for every good, and true, and unselfish life, in every creed, and in spite of the errors of that creed. Poor must your lineage be, if you can remember none of your own name and your own blood.

HOW TO ENJOY RICHES.

I AM going to ask the question: "Do you know how to be rich?" You need not burst into inextinguishable laughter and cry, "Any fool would know that." Any fool might, but you are not confessedly a fool, and the question is worth your consideration.

A very rich man said to me once: "I do not really know how to be rich and enjoy my riches. I was brought up in a very plain way, and had to look, for many years, long at a sixpence before I spent it, and I cannot get used to paying out money for a thousand things which I see other rich people find necessary and pleasant. It seems wasteful and extravagant to me. Nor can I accustom myself to very liberal giving. I do not wish to be mean, but it seems to me as if I would be doing wrong to give away as much as I see people doing who are not as rich as I am. I do not understand it, and to do the like would be to me positively painful and unnatural."

Now, the man who said this was a most excellent and worthy man; and while I pitied him as I would

pity a blind man living amid lovely sights, I felt the truth of what he said, and that a certain education, a certain training, was really necessary to enable a rich man thoroughly to enjoy his riches. A lesson easily learned, you say; but however that may be, I notice that a good many rich men do not learn it. There is nothing wrong in riches, and whenever you hear a preacher say so, just whisper to yourself: "Nonsense, he would grab at riches in a moment, if he had the chance."

It is the fashion now to abuse rich men and nag at them, and it makes many who are rich afraid of making any display; but comfort yourselves with the thought that it is righteous and just and proper that you should have all the comforts and luxuries your riches can procure you, so long as they are not demoralizing luxuries. Extravagance is a relative term, just like economy. Their meaning depends on the man to whom they are applied. It would be mean in a millionaire to haggle about some little expense, or to save his candle ends; it would be extravagant in a poor man not to do so; for if he did not, he would be apt to fall into debt. A man has the right to live according to his means; nay more, if you have a good income, it is your duty to live well. It helps trade; it makes life more comfortable; it broadens your own views of life, and puts you above those belittling and depressing cheese-parings which poverty often entails. I really do not know any material blessing for which a man ought to be more truly thankful, than the feeling that he has an income

sufficient to make both ends meet without pinching and stretching. Enjoy life then in a comfortable, happy way, without any compunctions of conscience, if you are rich enough to do so; though if you have the temperament and the Christian philosophy you will be surprised how much enjoyment you can get out of very little.

One great good you can get out of riches is to show hospitality with them. Dinner parties and pleasant recreations for those in your station of life are all right and perfectly consistent, but do more than this. I know a rich woman who lives and entertains according to her fortune; but every week her carriage goes to take some hospital nurses out riding; or some tired sewing girls are sent to see a good play; or some old women in an institution are invited to tea; or some young men, lonely in the great city, are asked to come to a Sunday dinner. I do not know anybody who enjoys a fortune more, or who makes more people enjoy it with her. You can do the same; and believe me, it brings a great deal more happiness than sticking big diamonds in your ears, or sewing lace, at one hundred dollars a yard, on your frocks.

Riches enable you to travel, to hear a good talk, to buy good pictures, to enjoy good music, and, in fact, to employ a hundred ways of softening your character and enlarging your mind; but do all this with somebody who cannot afford it, for that will make your own enjoyment infinitely greater. I do not believe you can get any good at

all out of riches unless you part with them. What fun can there be in just counting over your bank account and making a new list of your investments? The world is full of good causes that need help; and if you will only take time and study the subject (and there is no more delightful study), really finding out where your money is to go, and what a little timely supply will advance, you will be the happiest man in the world. There is no keener delight than the feeling that you are helping on a noble work; but just sending a check will not give you that delight. You must know about it, and interest yourself in it.

One annoyance all rich men have to bear, and that is, the conclusion arrived at by the people who know your affairs much better than you do yourself, that you ought to give more than you do. It is so easy to arrange what others ought to give; just try to be satisfied with keeping your own account right. Never give one cent which your creditors ought to have, for that is immoral.

JUGGLING WITH THE BIBLE.

YOU can prove anything you like from the Bible, if you are only smart enough to know how to juggle with words. There never was a queer sect, or heresy, or fad which could not pick you out a fine lot of texts to substantiate its dogmas. Tobacco was not discovered until many centuries after Christ; and yet there is a crank constantly publishing tracts against it, full of texts to prove the terrible wickedness of smoking and how sure of eternal punishment it is. I once went with a clerical friend to a Quaker funeral. There was an address, and the speaker wanted to air the peculiar Quaker views against the sacraments, so he said: "St. Paul hated Baptism, did he not say, 'I thank God I baptized none of you?'" This was a little too much, and my friend who was burly and big-voiced, roared out so loudly that he could be heard all over the cemetery, the rest of the verse, "except Crispus and Gaius, and I baptized also the household of Stephanas." This threw a coldness over the ceremony, but that way of quoting Scripture still goes on. I heard in my own chapel a

priest who believes there are just seven sacraments, gets them all out of the Lord's Prayer, though the most of us think it rather a stretch of interpretation even to make "Give us this day our daily bread" refer to one of the two our Church teaches as ordinarily necessary to the being in a state of salvation. The seven waterpots at the marriage of Cana have also been made to mean the seven sacraments; and the two swords which the Apostles had among them at the Last Supper were made to do duty for centuries as proving that both the spiritual and temporal power belonged to the Pope as head of the Church. A priest, not a hundred miles away, was asked once by a woman why it was necessary that all the consecrated wine should be consumed at the altar; and he told her the Scriptures said: "Drink ye all of this."

Now this way of treating God's word has done immense harm. It is just making the Holy Bible like those boxes of letters used for a well-known game. You pick out the letters you want and spell words with them. No doctrine ought even to be put to proof on simple texts sifted out here and there, and strung together without any regard to the context. You will often hear a man called a wonderful Bible preacher when all that he does is to make you up a mosaic of texts, many of which have not the slightest reference to the doctrine before him. Because a verse has the word "faith" in it is no proof that it teaches the doctrine of justification by faith, or illustrates that in any way. I have heard sermons which did not have

one word of Scripture in them, except the text; and yet which brought out the power and the spirit of God's word better than if they had been paved with texts.

When you want to clinch a doctrine with a text you must take one about the meaning of which there cannot be any logical controversy. For example, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now nothing but the most prejudiced and distorted reasoning can make that mean anything else than a clear statement of the divinity of Christ; but it is not so with that text from Genesis so often used in proof of the Trinity, "Let us make man in our image." That will not hold water for a moment. You cannot prove that there is no change in the condition of a soul after death from the text, "as the tree falleth so shall it lie;" for when you look into the context you see that it has no reference whatever to that subject. Then you must be sure that the original is rightly translated. Not watching this has been a fruitless source of pointless quotations. The Revised Version knocked the bottom out of many chosen vessels of texts which preacher after preacher had used as proofs incontestable of divers doctrines. Remember the devil quoted Scripture, and our Lord in His replies put His divine condemnation on that style of exegesis. The devil's children have quoted it many a time since.

As a well-known writer has said: "Tyranny has engraved texts upon her sword, oppression

has carved texts upon her fetters, cruelty has tied texts around her fagots, ignorance has set knowledge at defiance with texts woven on her flag, gin-drinking has been defended out of Timothy, and slavery has made a stronghold out of Philemon." It would be impossible to tell how many pious souls have been kept from Holy Communion by that obsolete and misguiding translation, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." The word "damnation" has totally changed its meaning, like many other English words. It meant originally, condemnation, blame, but it now means future punishment. The same remarks will apply to the word "hell," which in three cases out of four in the Bible means the grave, not the place of punishment. Any tinker thinks he can quote the Bible glibly, but these few remarks will show with what care, what reverence, what study, text quoting ought to be approached.

WHY IS THERE EVIL IN THE WORLD?

THERE is no question about which people worry so much as the one: "Why is there evil in the world? Why could not God have made the world good?" This worry is not confined at all to Christian people; but all over the world, in every creed, and in the past as well as in the present, this question has occupied the mind. There probably never was a child who did not ask its mother why God made the devil. There is one very convenient theory, extensively held in old times, and even by some philosophers now; that there are two great first principles, one the creator of good, and the other the creator of evil; that these two are eternally fighting for victory, and that in the end the creator of good will triumph. Christians, however, must abhor such a doctrine. There can be only one Creator, only one Supreme Being. God and the devil are not equal, one is the creature of the other. Whatever power evil has, is either necessary from the constitution of things, or permitted, until its errand is accomplished.

But after you have said that, the old, old question will come up. If God be greater than evil, He

must allow it to be here; why does He do that? Why is it not impossible for us to do evil? Now the whole mystery of evil is far beyond my power to solve. It is the rock against which all philosophy has ever dashed itself in vain; but for all that there are good, common sense answers to the questions I have stated, which may relieve many minds, and show very plainly why there is evil in the world, and why we are not all good children.

Suppose God had made everybody so that it would be impossible to be bad. I do not think it in His power to do that, but just for the moment I will grant that He could, what would we then all be? Why, just machines. A steam engine has to do one way. It has no choice. Its cranks and wheels and pistons are put together to act just so; and unless it break down, it has got to act that way. Animals are practically the same. They live in a prescribed way, and they cannot live in any other way. They never reason that it is wrong to sting and claw and choke their neighbors. They have no moral sense. We do not blame snakes for poisoning people. No one would arrest a snake and try it, and put it into jail. We all say: Snakes cannot help doing so, they are incapable of sinning. But do you not see, they are also incapable of doing good? They cannot, because they have no free-wills, do acts of humanity, of generosity, of self-sacrifice. The two things go together. If you are capable of doing good, you must be capable of doing evil. If you

cannot do evil, you cannot do good. This comes of necessity from free-will.

God wished to surround Himself with creatures who could give up self, who could resist temptation, who could give Him voluntary obedience; and to do that, He had to give such creatures free-will. He did not want servants who had to obey whether they would or no. You can judge from your own feelings, for you are made in God's image. What pleasure would there be to you in the company of men who were like a box of tin soldiers? Where they were set up they had to stay. They have no will. They cannot change. You want companions who can of their own choice love you, help you, give up their wills for yours. Much more then must God like that, so He made us free to do evil as well as to do good. If you cannot possibly do evil, you are not free, you are a machine, you are a tin soldier. If you are put in a box, you stay there; if you are bent you cannot straighten yourself. You have no merit in keeping straight and you deserve no praise for keeping your place. Do you not see that to be men as we are, with a power of choice, we must have the power to choose evil?

But could not God have made us with wills which would never will evil? No, He could not, and have us men; for the very word "will" implies the ability to choose one of two courses. Remember, there are things God cannot do. When we say He can do all things, we mean all possible things. God cannot make square round, nor two and

two three, nor good evil; nor is it in His power to make such a thing as a man without the possibility of that man choosing wrong. It was a dead certainty when God created spirits and men with the power of choice that some among them would choose to disobey. They did choose that way, and evil came into the world.

But could not God have shielded us from temptation? Well, He could, just as you could keep a man out of mischief by chaining him to a post; but you keep him then out of good at the same time; he cannot do harm, but neither can he do good. If we were to have the power of growing better, of rising higher, of progress, of glorious self-sacrifice, we had to have the power of refusing to do all this. Do you not think that God made just as perfect a man as He could and give him free-will, and do you think this reasoning accounts sufficiently for evil spirits and evil men? Do not say "free-will then was a bad thing to give us." Why, our free-will has enabled us to do all the splendid things we have done; achievements in art, in culture, in civilization, in moral excellence, in devotion. We would just be like tigers and apes without it. We must take the risks of the evil that comes with it, just as with the glorious sun we take the risks of sunstroke, and drought, and putrefaction.

FOR FOURTH OF JULY.

LET us think a little of our relations to our country as Christian men and women. It is too often the case that Churchmen forget altogether that patriotism is a Christian virtue, and that the duties to the State are insisted upon by the writers of the New Testament with quite as much force as any other duties. We seem to think that a class of persons called politicians are to attend to the State, just as tailors attend to our clothes, and tinkers to our tinware; that these people know all about that business and we can leave it in their hands. The results have been most fearful—corruption, bribery, wild extravagance, foolish laws—simply because people without principle have had the management of such things.

Now, I contend that it is not only a silly and a very costly mistake in Churchmen to let politics alone, but it is really a sin; a sin because it is selfish and ignores the good of the community, and considers not our neighbor. Just according to our influence, and our position, and our endowments, will God hold us responsible for having

neglected our duties to the State. In some countries, in Turkey, for example, men might be excusable for letting the State entirely alone. They might say: "We are not consulted about the officials and the law-makers, and so we will not meddle with them, but thank the Lord when they are tolerably decent, get along the best we can when they are rogues, and when things get too bad, try a riot and a revolution." We cannot give this excuse, for God has put in our hands a tremendous power. We can, by a little piece of paper called a ballot, decide directly who shall occupy almost every office in this land, and indirectly every office, for we can choose those who are to appoint to other offices. This power is not restricted to a few of us. The poorest man has it as well as the richest. The black man wields it as well as the white, the illiterate are endowed with it as well as the college professors. I am rather doubtful about the wisdom of this universal suffrage, but that has nothing to do with it; we have it, and we are responsible for it. Since we and we alone decide who are to make and carry out the laws, we and we alone will be held responsible by God for the sort of men we choose. Even if we are deceived in men, as is very likely to be the case, the elections occur so often that we need not have to endure them a great while; we can put others in their places. Never before on such a scale as this, has power been put in the hands of all men. There are no privileged classes in a political sense. The whole population is before us to

choose, and eligibility to office is almost as extensive as the number of electors.

I am often amazed to see how lightly we esteem this awful power; a power greater in its consequences and its possibilities than electricity or steam. One of the worst features about this is that as we grow better informed and more prosperous, and attain higher social position, the less we seem to care about using our voting privilege. Englishmen are so different; the greatest nobles and the whole leisured class take an active interest in politics, and give a great deal of attention to them. I think our upper classes are improving, but the case is bad enough, and causes the most serious alarm among thinking men. Do not say that you belong to a party and must vote with that. You are a free man. You can vote as you please, and if your party is trying to carry an iniquitous measure, you are put in no danger, unless you are an office holder, by leaving it. Even if you were, duty to country is above mere selfish interest; it is one of the most sacred duties in the world.

Now, I call upon you as Churchmen, as servants of Christ, as under the Spirit, the author of true liberty, to consider carefully the character of the people who are to make the laws, and for whom you are to vote. I do not ask that they shall be Churchmen, but that they shall be honest and clean. I would infinitely rather have a true-hearted secularist for alderman of my ward, than a dishonest and sneaking Churchman. What we

want are men who fear God and who keep His commandments; who could no more be bribed than the Washington monument, and whom no newspaper could intimidate. They do not need to be college bred, or the owners of fine houses, if they have good, honest common sense, and have the welfare of the community and not their own pockets in consideration. Do not say that such men are too hard to find. Honest men, thank God, are in the ascendant, for if they were not, utter confusion would cover all our business. It may be hard to induce such men to take office; but that is because the sense of the duty of citizenship is so dull and dormant. By the press and by the pulpit a public opinion must be created which will really force men who can be useful to make the sacrifice of some of their time for the benefit of their city, or their country, or their State; and they ought to be compensated for any loss they may have to sustain in doing so. You certainly can exercise as much care in choosing an alderman, etc., as you would in choosing a business partner, or an administrator for your estate. You cannot shove this off on any Kaiser, grand duke, or high mightiness. In the Providence of God it has been put upon you; and the way you have attended to it will come in with all the rest of your life at the judgment, and form a more important part of it than you seem to think.

WHY DO THE INNOCENT HAVE TO SUFFER?

IN answer to the question, "Why God permits evil in the world," I know very well people will say: "Your answer may be a good one, but why do innocent people have to undergo all this pain and suffering?" "People who do not choose evil, why do they have to suffer evil? Take children, innocent women, good and noble men, and all the brute creation who have no power of choice; why do they often have to undergo such agonies and bear so much unmerited suffering?"

Now just as in the "Origin of Evil," so in "Pain and Sorrow" there are great depths which the keenest intellect has never been able to fathom; but if some reasons for the good of suffering can be shown, does it not prove pretty clearly that if we knew enough, other reasons would come to light? that the darkness on the subject comes from our not having eyes keen enough to pierce it? Let me see whether I cannot give some well-founded answers to the query: "Why do the innocent have to suffer?"

In the first place, pain is the best thing in the world to keep us from greater pain. Unless pain

attached to certain acts we would all die before our time. If a burnt child did not dread the fire, why, it would run into the fire the next chance it got, and perish. The pain keeps it away, and saves it. If I did not get a pain in my stomach from eating wrong food, I would be eating something very bad for me all the time; and very soon my body would become poisoned, and I would die. Every one soon gets to know that pain is a signal for the stopping of certain things; so in that way pain is one of our best friends.

Then again, if you will run over in your memory the lives of men and women who have been of much use in the world, and are much known, you will probably find that they are people who have had to suffer a great deal, and that suffering has made them greatly what they are. Take Dante; his life was one of great sorrow and trial, and it gave him an insight into life that nothing else could have done. Suffering develops patience, cheerfulness, unselfishness. I know you will say that it does not always act in that way, that it sometimes hardens people, and makes them very bitter. That is true; but you can say of the fire which warms you and cooks your food, that it can destroy your property and burn up your child; that, however, does not controvert the truth that fire is a great blessing. That a good thing is sometimes perverted to a bad purpose is no proof against its being a good thing. Our free will is responsible for that.

Then, again, pain and suffering make us a great deal more pitiful and sympathetic. There is an old Latin line which put in English reads: "Not ignorant of suffering, I know how to succor others," and nothing could be truer. If you want sympathy you will not find it in some boy who knows nothing about life, but in some one who has buffeted its waves and tasted its bitter cups. He can enter into your feelings and do you good. Again, I do not believe there ever was developed any very strong, self-reliant character, without suffering. People born with silver spoons in their mouths sometimes amount to something, but it is the exception. It takes adversity, it takes struggle, to make a man evolve his best gifts, and rise to his best usefulness. Darwin says somewhere that he is sure he would not have done half the work he did, if he had not been so troubled with ill health.

But the question will be pressed: Why do so many innocent people have to suffer, as for example, those destroyed by floods or earthquakes, or cholera? Why do mothers have to undergo the agony of seeing their little innocent children taken from them before they can speak? Now all nature is under great laws, the winds, the waves, the germs. Certain causes will produce certain effects. Our experience teaches us this, and we feel that unless this were so, unless we could always rely on fire producing heat, and seeds planted producing fruit, life would be perfectly intolerable. If we did not know that we were in a kingdom of laws, how could we transact business, make promises, engage

in undertakings? Uncertainty about the seasons, or the effect of this or that process, would paralyze everything. Now if law must prevail, it is perfectly impossible, without a miracle, to prevent its often hurting innocent people. If the laws of sanitation are so violated that cholera breaks out, why, innocent and good people have to die as well as evil and guilty. If children or their parents violate the laws of health, they must perish, no matter how dear they are.

Do you think that exceptions ought to be made in your favor, and that your house in cholera seasons ought to be marked by God, so that the angel of the pestilence would pass over it? Such a thing could not be. If God should break the laws of nature for you, He ought to do it for the next person; and if He kept breaking it for every case, utter confusion would ensue. Just imagine us the victims of chance or caprice. Laws are made to produce the greatest good to the greatest number; and some have to suffer when they come athwart them. Do not let this keep you from prayer. There is a law for that as for other things; and as God harmonizes all laws, so He does that, and it works just as all other laws work, under His loving care.

HAVING A TRYING DISPOSITION.

A WOMAN was lately talking to me about her son who, she said, had such a "trying" disposition. Let us talk a little about this word "trying." What does it mean? Why, something that makes great demands on the patience, the temper, the courtesy, the religion, of those who have to deal with it. Have you a trying disposition? Oh, of course not. You know a large number of people who have, and you wonder how people can live with them, but you are not that kind of a person at all. How fortunate! But as you love to give advice, you may get some ideas from this paper which you can communicate to the people who are trying, and that will "try" them a little.

It does not follow because you are called "trying," that you are through and through disagreeable. A man may be very agreeable in very many ways, and in one or two others very trying. Indeed, some of the most trying persons I ever knew in my life, were really very good, spiritually minded, and excellent people. I once knew a man

thoroughly well bred, filled with zeal, fervent in good works, profoundly religious; and yet there was no one who had anything to do with him for any time who did not find him trying. He seemed never to be able to do anything in the way the majority thought right, and there was always friction and ruffled feathers. A clergyman told me he had a man in his parish respected by every one who knew him, an eminent example of holy living, devoted to the said clergyman and constantly doing favors for him, in fact, his right hand man; and yet the whole parish put together, even counting the ritualistic old maids, who are perhaps the most trying religious things ever created, did not worry and fret the clergyman like that man. He always was wanting things done which the clergyman knew would be most unwise to do. He would often in very small ways show a disposition to tyrannize. He would listen often to gossip of the rankest character and annoy the clergyman with it. He really spoiled his admirable qualities by a few disagreeable traits. I have no doubt if you had asked him about his rector he would have spoken most lovingly about him, but would have added confidentially: "He is, you know, somewhat trying, but I manage to get on with him."

I think I hear you say: "No one is perfect, we are all weak, erring human beings; and the clergyman of whom you speak ought to have been very thankful that he had such a parishioner, and not to have bothered about his little imperfections." Well, he was thankful, he loved the man very dearly, but

that could not blind him to the fact that he could have improved himself greatly. We all love trying people, often very much, and they love us who are equally trying.

But because we all have this infirmity, shall we fold our hands and say: "Nothing can be done to help it. It is just our way and we cannot do any other way?" Hot weather is trying, but you endeavor to find remedies for it. You wear light clothes; you sit in the shade; you avoid exercise and excitement. You can palliate, soften, modify, turn in another direction, a vast number of very annoying things. Surely, it is a Christian's duty to labor at getting the motes out of his eyes, motes which every one about him will certify to being tolerably stout beams. But you reply: "We do not know when we are trying, if we did, we might work at it." Oh yes, you do. Often and often your conscience has whispered to you: "That way of talking and acting is not the right way, it ought to be changed," but you have given no heed. I do not believe that any one is always thoroughly blind to his faults. It must have occurred sometimes even to the Spanish Philip II. that he was hypocritical, selfish, cruel. When you are told by some one intimately connected with you that certain ways you have are very trying ways, do not say to yourself: "Oh, that is just mistaken judgment," or "What nonsense to make such a fuss about trifles." Give the matter very serious consideration, think over it, pray over it, and, what is more, struggle to get the better of it. Why, even

the most ingrained defects can be overcome by hard work with God's implored help. The miser can become generous; the hot-tempered, patient; the profane, sweet-spoken; the tale-bearer, reticent; the censorious, charitable. Such transformations have been seen millions of times in the world of grace, and in men and women fashioned of the same clay you are. Just as in the physical world, deaf and blind and crippled men have so artfully mastered their weaknesses that they can really accomplish more than hearing and seeing men, so can you in the moral and spiritual world deal with your trying ways until you have really made them the ladders on which you may mount to higher things. Are you "trying" at the table, finding fault with the food, and spoiling all your wife's or your mother's meals by making sharp remarks about everything they have provided? Some men do that as regularly as they sit down, and seem to think sneering at the food as necessary a condiment as salt and pepper. Nothing can be more trying. Have you some little ways of sitting, speaking, dressing, which try your husband, but which you persist in thinking just fanciful in him to fuss about? Anything that annoys others is not a trifle; and even if the fact that others are annoyed by it is "trying" to you, so much the more should you strive to get rid of it. Trifles make up our lives, and any one can bear with more composure having an arm cut off in fifteen minutes than having pins stuck in it for fifteen years.

NON-DOCTRINAL SERMONS.

I NOTICE that an association has been formed to supply the public with non-sectarian and non-doctrinal sermons. Now to my mind a sermon that was non-sectarian and non-doctrinal would be worthy of a place in the greatest show on earth. I presume "non-sectarian" means a sermon to which neither Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Ethical Culture, Christian Science, Universalist, nor Unitarian, could object; a sermon out of which has been taken anything that could possibly be faulted by any particular division of Christians; a sermon that could be preached in a joss house as well as a Church, and would be quite as appropriate for the steps of a Japanese temple as the pulpit of a modern meeting house. Such a sermon would be very much like a rice pudding, from which had been removed the rice, the sugar, the flour, the salt and the eggs. The *residuum* would be *nil*. The ministers who are to write these sermons belong to various sects, and honestly profess to hold the views of the sect to which they belong, and to believe that their sect presents the best pos-

sible exposition of Christianity. How can they with any consistency set forth sermons which utterly ignore the "best possible exposition of Christianity?" Is that fair? Is that honest? Can they do this without juggling with words? How, for example, could a Baptist or Methodist clergyman urge people to follow Christ and walk in His way, without alluding to Baptism and the Lord's Supper? And yet these two things are certainly sectarian; for the Salvation Army, the Y. M. C. A., the Christian Scientists, the Quakers, and many other Christian bodies do not hold these things as at all indispensable in the right following of Christ. This association of ministers must leave them all out, and yet the sects to which they belong teach in their confessions of faith their absolute necessity as part of the following of Christ.

But far funnier than the non-sectarian sermon would be the non-doctrinal one. How I should like to see it! But alas! I never can, because it is perfectly impossible that it should exist. Remember, it is to be a Christian sermon, set forth by Christian ministers as an exposition of Christianity. It must rest on the belief in one God, all just, all holy, all powerful, all merciful. Certainly nothing less than that could express any Christian idea of God; and yet here immediately we have a doctrine over which men have fought and disputed and agonized for thousands of years; but in the plan of these sermons disputed doctrines must be ignored. I would ask how then, in the name of

common sense, can you, on these terms, lay even the foundations for number one, in the course of non-doctrinal sermons? It is perfectly natural that all religious doctrine should cause dispute, because religious doctrine is like the doctrine of our family life, or the doctrine of our government; something that is woven in with our life, and we naturally resent its being disparaged. In times of ignorance we resented it with fire and sword, and we still are using bad and bitter and intolerant language about it. All that was wrong; but if we have any robust faith at all, we must of necessity protest boldly, strongly, loudly against those who attack it. We would be false to our Captain, Jesus Christ, and chicken-livered soldiers of the Cross, if we did otherwise. Picture to yourself a sermon which did not dare to say for fear of being thought doctrinal, that God punished the wicked and rewarded the righteous; or that could only allude to Christ in the most general and milk-and-watery way for fear of treading on the toes of the doctrines of His nature, His knowledge, His power, His remedial work. Would it not be Hamlet with Hamlet left out? Remember that a sermon which denies or ignores certain doctrines is just as doctrinal as any other. "I do not believe in the personality but in the immanency of God, and I believe the Lord Jesus to be human born only, and only a great exemplar," is just exactly as much of a creed and a doctrinal statement as the Nicene Creed. The people who hold such views hold them as their creed; and if they have an organization

(and they must have to live) that will be the creed of the organization, and these will be the doctrines preached. Do you not see that a non-doctrinal sermon is as great a monstrosity as a six-legged calf?

But we will be told that the object of this course of non-doctrinal sermons will be to teach morality. Yes, but what kind of morality? Turkish morality? Apache morality? or Christian morality? But Christian morality rests on the Christian religion, and the Christian religion is a series of doctrines concerning Christ and His teaching. It cannot be stated without immediately involving dogma. It is not conceivable that these ministers intend to set forth that modern code of morals which boasts itself as entirely free from the shackles of Christian opinion, and resting entirely upon the natural desires of man. Beyond a doubt, they intend strongly to urge every human being to repentance, to throw off sin, to seek the face of God in prayer, to recognize a duty to a father as shown in a child-like obedience, and to the practising of every virtue because God loves it. Their ideal will be the Lord Jesus, and to Him will they point their hearers. But all this is Christian doctrine; it is the essence of the Christian Creed. Christian morality is founded on Christian doctrines, and it is pure moonshine to talk of non-doctrinal sermons.

ROUNDING OFF THE CORNERS.

I AM going to call this paper "Rounding off the Corners," and it was suggested by the following words in the Bishop of New York's Convention Address last year: "Our duty to the social fabric, yours and mine, is not to pull it down, because its existence seems to us to involve certain intolerable hardships; but to make these hardships tolerable, as even the hardest labor and the sorest privations may be made tolerable by an inexhaustible sympathy, and a never-tiring helpfulness to all within our reach." I could not have a better text than these words; let me preach from them.

We all know how road builders and track layers strive to avoid sharp corners; how they try not to have sudden twists and hard places to get around. Anything angular and stiff and sharp is, when possible, put out of the way. Now, life is full of sharp corners, and corners which could not be made otherwise than sharp. They had to be so, and we may try as much as we please to construct life without them, but it cannot be done. Yes, our socialistic and anarchistic friends say, and that it

is so proves the whole structure of society to be wrong, and it ought to be pulled down to the ground and built up again without any sharp corners. That would be a pretty big job, however, and it is not likely to be soon done, and we cannot wait for it. Besides, it is utterly impracticable to tear everything down. It could not be done without tearing down much that is priceless, and just as useful and just as necessary as any new thing that could be found. Westminster Abbey is very old and rusty and time-eaten; but nobody thinks of tearing it down, but of restoring it, of renewing the worn out parts, of propping and strengthening the work; society is very much like that. It will be much more profitable to see how we can stop leaks, patch walls, put in new pieces here and there, than to labor and howl (and it is chiefly howling these iconoclasts do) that everything must come down and we must have a bran new thing.

The amusing part is that these pullers down are all by the ears as to what kind of a building ought to go up in place of the present one; and the experiments they have hitherto tried have been anything but reassuring to plain people. Let us recognize the sharp corners, wish with all our hearts they were not there; but knowing that we cannot help their existence, strive to pad them, try to round them off, try to make them as little sharp as possible. You have no idea how much can be done in this way, by showing, as Bishop Potter says, "an inexhaustible sympathy and a never-

tiring helpfulness to all within our reach." Remember, sharp corners occur in the running of the rich as well as the poor; and quite as many rich people as poor fall over them and are hurt, and want sympathy as badly as any poor person does.

I need not give a complete list of the inevitable hardships of life, and I mean by that those which do not belong to good conduct or misconduct, and which may come to the most pious as well as the most wicked, and fall upon the most prudent and lie in wait for the most careful and blameless. It will be sufficient to mention sickness, loss of situation from inevitable causes, loss of property through the fault of others, unworthy relatives, undeserved blame, loss of some limb or faculty by which you earned your living, pinching poverty, wretched environment from which there is no escape, witnessing the prosperity of wickedness and the success of the tyrant and the grabber, and sorrow in its myriad and perfectly irresistible forms. We have to meet these and they cannot be got out of life. Riches cannot keep them all off, and poverty does not bring them all on. They are independent of money and rank and learning. Now, it is no use to shake your fist at these things, and wail and rail at the state of things which produces them. There they are, and they say, "What are you going to do about it?" Money will help some, but it is no more use in many others than dead leaves would be.

There is one thing which will help us all, no matter whether the sufferer be rich or poor; and it

is a thing the poorest can have at his disposal just as freely as the rich; and that is sympathy. If we can have that, the sharpest corners will lose some of their sharpness; and we can bear, as we never thought we could, the rawness of the sores which running against them constantly makes. Do not put me off by saying, "Oh, sympathy is like a taste for music; some people are born with it and others are not; I was not, and, therefore, I must be excused." Nonsense, we are no more born with cultivated hearts than we are with cultivated minds. Indeed, when we see how cruel children are, we sometimes doubt whether sympathy is ever natural, but that is only for a moment. We feel that there is a natural foundation on which, with determined efforts and the help of God, we can develop a greater power of sympathy. We have to learn to be self-forgetting, to look steadily at human life and think about it, and get into our minds how hard it is for some, and to enter into their feelings. Our Lord expressed this divinely when He called it "losing your life for others' sake." If you want to round off the corners in your fellows' lives, you have got to lose your own life, to lose the hugging yourself, always thinking about your own comfort, dwelling on your own fancies. You must merge yourself in the life around you; and by reading, by observation, by keeping your eyes and heart open, learn to feel for men; not theatre feeling, but the feeling that prompts you to do, to say, to plan, to arrange what you possibly can to help. If you do not do this, you will suffer

for it. Tom Hood wrote a poem which pictures a woman seeing pass before her a procession of the people she might have helped and did not; and she shrieks: "No need of sulphur and of boiling lead for my punishment; this crowd is what damns my soul."

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD.

AS I was listening to the Gospel about the unjust steward on the 9th Sunday after Trinity, I thought of the pages and pages which have been written to explain it. Many a dusty old tome hidden away in libraries is full of discussions about this story. The steward stood for this, and the debtors for that, and the rich man for so and so, and it was a great jumble. But is the parable so difficult after all? Has not the difficulty been created, as in so many other places in the Bible, by overlooking the very plain meaning on the surface? Let us see:

A rich proprietor, who owned a great deal of property, employed, of course, an agent to look after it, and to this agent were given of necessity very full powers. He fixed the rents. He made the leases, and in him the greatest confidence was placed. The proprietor heard in some way that the agent was doing crooked work, and that it was not safe to have him longer in charge. He made up his mind to dismiss him, notified him that he intended to do so, and asked for the accounts

that there might be a final settlement. The agent was very much taken aback at being found out, and said to himself: "What am I going to do? I have not saved up anything. I cannot turn my hand to any menial work, and I certainly am too proud to take up begging as a means of support." He then, being a very bright fellow, thought out a plan by which he could make some capital for himself, and provide some resources when he should lose his place. He sent for his master's tenants and said to one:

"What rent do you pay?"

"I pay a hundred measures of oil a year."

"Well, now, just alter your lease from one hundred to fifty."

It was easy to alter the leases, for they were written on wax tablets, and with a little skill one could easily change figures. This, you see, reduced his rent about one-half. Of course the tenant was most willing, for he knew the agent arranged these things, and he thought him most obliging to do this great favor for him. Then another tenant was sent for, and told to change his rent, which in the lease was put at a hundred measures of wheat, to eighty. Probably other tenants were similarly favored, and this sharp trick made them all very great friends of the agent, and ready to do him any good turn they could. The agent was found out however, for there is always somebody to tell; and while the proprietor hated to be cheated, and was probably very angry about it, he could not help "commending the

unjust steward because he had done wisely." That is, he could not help expressing his admiration for the clever trick, and crying to his friends: "What a bright fellow this cheating steward is, and how admirably he has feathered his own nest at my expense."

We have all done this. I have been intensely angry at having been fooled by some adventurer asking for help; and yet I could not help admiring the smartness and the wisdom shown by the rogue in fooling me. This is the story our Lord told, in the Eastern fashion, to a listening crowd, and he proceeded to point a moral from the steward's conduct. "How this shows," He says, "the superior prudence and quick-wittedness of worldly people in managing worldly affairs, so superior to that of unworldly people." He does not approve of the agent's conduct, that was impossible; but he uses him to show the pains people take and the thought they give to bring good results out of investments; and he urges on those who have nobler things to manage, some of the same acuteness and the same wisdom.

Why should not the same keen and strict business principles be applied to managing churches and hospitals and colleges, that we see every day applied in the world of trade to corporations and business concerns? Because you are pious is no reason in the world why you should not manage your affairs, and other people's affairs entrusted to you, as carefully as the most irreligious man would, and you will do well in that to imitate him. You

need not imitate his drinking, swearing, lying, and loose morality; but you can imitate his foresight, his prudence, his unceasing care and attention. Then our Lord draws another lesson from the agent's making friends for himself out of his business acquaintance. He advises religious people to use their worldly advantages to make themselves heavenly friends. Make them, he says, out of your money, out of your position, out of your credit, out of your talents. Use these to the best advantage for God and for your fellow men. Do good with them. Employ them for noble ends, never for purely selfish purposes. Give your money in good causes; use your position to help on worthy enterprises which need the bolster of a well-known name; lend your credit to a deserving friend to whom it will be life. Take your talents, whatever they may be, and employ them, not wholly for yourself, but also for the glory of God. Then "when ye fail," which means "when you die," all these good things you have done by the help of your worldly riches, all those products of your unselfishness, will "welcome you into everlasting habitations," that is, into Paradise; will stand around you, will vouch for you, will be the grandest body-guard your enfranchised spirit, going to meet its Lord, could have. Is not this a simple explanation of the parable?

Do not think our Lord's term for money, etc., "mammon of unrighteousness," a harsh one. You yourself often call it "filthy lucre" and "dirty

money," for it is that so often, but it need not be ; and, Moodyism and Calvinism to the contrary notwithstanding, it can be made, as our Lord says, a very cloud of witnesses for you, when, with your hand in His, you would enter heaven.

I.—THE TWELVE HOURS OF THE DAY.

WHEN our Lord said: "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" He spoke a proverb, and He meant by day, life, just as we say, "The day of Washington or Napoleon." He meant all the various duties and interests of life, expressed by the perfect number twelve, as coming into any life to make it a well-rounded one. Have you these twelve hours in your life? These are the twelve hours: 1, prayer; 2, worship; 3, duties to self; 4, duties to others; 5, pleasure; 6, business; 7, rest; 8, travel; 9, citizenship; 10, study; 11, thought; 12, society; and I say boldly that any day, that is, any life, that has not these twelve hours in it, is an imperfect day, a life marred. I do not mean that every life has got to have them in the same proportions, hours of the same length; but that every well-rounded life must have them all in, or it is not well-rounded. Let us review the dial-plate of our life, and see whether the hour or even the minute hand ever points to all the hours.

And first, prayer. Does that regularly and every day come into your time? I do not mean

just something done from habit and without thought. You and I, when we were boys, and alas! often since we have been men, have knelt down and dashed off an "Our Father," or "Now I lay me," and "God bless my parents," etc., without any more real interest than if we had been repeating the alphabet. That is not prayer, though it is much better than no prayer at all; for into that form the substance will sometimes come. I do not mean that. I ask you whether some time, between your uprising and your lying down, you lift your heart up from earth toward your dear Lord in heaven, ask Him to help you, ask Him to pardon you and to guide your path? Now, you may have all the other eleven things in your day, and if you have not this, it is a bad day. It is like some dish with costly ingredients with the salt forgotten. It is tasteless.

Second, worship; the public recognition and worship of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Does this come into your week, we will say, for it may not be in your power to have it come into your day. You may reply: "I am here in church every Sunday." Ah, that is all very well, but what do you do in church? Do you take a real part? You might go to an election; it would not help your party on much if you did not vote. Do you, while you are in church (making allowance for the wandering of the mind, which no human being can possibly escape entirely in any service), do you enter with heartiness and devotion into

what is going on, into the confessions, the petitions for this or that need, the thanksgiving for mercies, the glorious praise of the majesty of God, and the sweet festival of love, when we gather around the common table of our Master?

Third, duty to self. No man can neglect himself for one day without its telling on all the days that come after. I do not confine myself to his personal appearance, though I do consider that very important, and the calling it vanity most foolish and empty. I include, and put in the first rank, the care of his temper, his words, his example, his actions. We have to watch ourselves every moment; for a whole crowd of passions, tendencies, impulses, stand on tiptoe ready to rush off the very moment the guard relaxes his attention. If you leave out this care even for twelve hours, it piles up work for the next day, which has its own burden.

Fourth, duty to others. I trust you have love in your lives. A life that has not in it, at some time, the love of man for woman, or woman for man, the family love, is really only half a life, a six-hour day, not a twelve; but I mean much more than this. Do you every day of your life recall to yourself the fact that you are one in a joint brotherhood; that all men are your fellows, and that no one of them can suffer without its being your duty, if possibly within your power, to furnish that help; that your fortune and your talents are not yours for yourself, but for all your circle, all

with whom you are in touch; yes, all men everywhere. In some slight way, this hour must enter into every twelve.

Fifth, pleasure. One single day without pleasure in it is like one of those days in nature, all gray. I do not mean by pleasure, vice, though alas, it is often confounded with it; but I do mean laughter and fun. I do mean something that lightens the heart, and blows care out of the window for a little time. It used to be thought that if you were really religious you must have a long face; but we have got past that and perhaps lean to the other side. Even the old Puritans got a great deal more fun out of life than you think, though much of it was very coarse fun. Life is often so hard, the day grinds on so heavily, do not be afraid to lighten it with innocent mirth and a good deal of levity.

Sixth, business. This, of course, must be one of the longest of the twelve hours, and often of necessity must crowd upon the others. It must receive attention. It must have the principal portion of your time, and the larger portion of your thoughts; for it is the substratum on which has to be built up your public and your private life. Preachers sometimes talk as if there were some kind of a sin in a man's occupying himself with the things of this world, but how can he help it? and, indeed, ought he to help it? Is not his business a great school for his character, and a lever by which he can work in the world for others' good as well as for his own? No, go regularly to

your business, put into it your best energies, transact it in the fear of God, and according to a strict construction of the rules of honor; never be mean, truckling, or overbearing in it. God will then surely cry: "A well-spent hour."

II.—THE TWELVE HOURS OF THE DAY.

LET us continue the subject of the twelve hours of the day of life. We have considered six: prayer, worship, duty to self, duty to others, pleasure and business; the seventh is rest. We are talking of twelve hours of day, not of night; so I do not mean sleep, necessary as that is. I pity the being who cannot get his full share of that; and I warn the man who thinks he can curtail it, that some time or other, offended nature will rise up and punish him for depriving her of her rights; but I do not mean that, I mean a cessation from work; I mean idleness, if you choose to call the rest of a man who works, by that ill name. We have idlers, and a useless tribe they are; but believe me, pure rest is just as much in the plan of God for a true day as any work is; and when from force or from necessity, you cannot get it every day, it is wrong, it is against nature, and that is against God.

Eighth, travel. Many will say the day could be very full, the life well lived without that, and it is true. One could serve God and His fellow-men without ever crossing the bounds of his own little

village; but we are talking now of a full, true life, and that needs to have in it this ingredient also. You need every now and then, if possible (and in these days, hard indeed must be your lot, if you cannot sometimes do it) to get away from the narrow precincts in which you have to live; to get out of the rut into which you inevitably fall; to breathe new air and see new men. I remember a man telling me that he came into the Church in a little village, where it was a small, weak, despised thing; and though he heard its greatness preached about, he never realized it until he went to New York, and saw what a power it was, its splendid churches, its glorious services. Travel broadens your idea of God, and deepens your charity for man.

Ninth, citizenship. For many of you, and this applies every day more and more to the educated and thoughtful, this part of the day is utterly passed by. You seem to think that from some source or other comes the government, and that it will take care of itself and you; but recollect, you are the government, you make it, you unmake it. God has put into your hands this wonderful power of making your laws, appointing your law-givers, displacing them, changing them often and as you will. No matter then what Turks may say as an excuse for letting alone any misgovernment, on the plea that they have no power to help it, Americans cannot say that. They can help it; and any man who lets day after day of his life pass by without studying the questions of the hour, and putting in

that powerful piece of paper to shape them this way or that way, deserves anarchy, deserves oppression, deserves to suffer from the trickery of politics, deserves the anger of God.

Tenth, study. And can there not be a life without study? Yes, there can be. Oysters live and vegetables exist; but is that the day a man with powers of soul and spirit should choose for himself? We cannot all learn alike, and our Bible or our Shakespeare affords far more to one than to another, because he brings a clearer eye and a more discerning spirit to its study; but there lives no man who cannot learn, and if he will not, he commits the sin of wilful ignorance, which in the category of sins takes a higher rank, and is stained with a deeper dye, than many of you think. "To know," is man's most splendid aspiration; and knowledge comes by labor. You are not born with it, and money will not buy it; oh, put into your life this noble hour of study. Learn all you can of your world, of its Author, of its Saviour, of its destiny. The more a chastened intellect expands here the higher the place it takes there.

Eleventh, society. We have to live in society, whether we want to do so or not. We are all dependent on each other, and if a man shuts himself away from all human intercourse, he must starve; that is inevitable. But let us get above that and remember that society is heaven-descended. It is God's way of lessening our selfishness, of rounding off the rough edges of our character, of bringing out love and fidelity and friendship and mutual

help. There can be no advancement without it; and even in a state of savagery its main principles are ever found. What are you doing to brighten it, to purify it, to elevate it? It is made up of individuals, and just what they are, it must be. A village of drunkards will have a society of brutality and lust and filth; a village of self-respecting, God-fearing men and women is a power, subtle and penetrating, which moves and changes far beyond its own limits. If you love men, go among them and take their hands.

And now we reach the twelfth hour of the day, and it is, thought; no life is fair and even without it. I do not mean thought about what we shall eat, or wherewithal we shall be clothed; but the asking oneself, every now and then, the solemn questions: "Where do I stand? To what am I tending? Am I going backward or forward? Do I grow better or worse? Am I of use, or damage, in the world?" Unless you have this hour and apply its warnings, your life will be thin and superficial, and there will be a flaw in it which will widen as the days go on.

And so, hastily throwing out in each point, some hints to start your own reflections, have I traced the day of life, as it seems to me a Christian man should strive to have it, and for which God's aid ever waits. May it be your day; and may it draw, hour by hour, on through all the twelve, until the night is reached, and lo, there is no night! A moment of darkness, and we step out into the perfect day!

THE BESETTING SINS OF THE RICH AND OF THE POOR.

I HEARD a very interesting sermon the other Sunday on the difficulty a rich man had in being a Christian. A great many rich men were sitting near me, and I watched their countenances to see how they took it. They listened very quietly, but they seemed to be saying to themselves: "Oh, I shall get to heaven all right, in spite of what he says."

The sermon led me to think on the relative obstacles in the way of a religious life for a rich or a poor man; and really I could not see much difference. They appear to me pretty well balanced. Of course when our Lord said: "A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven," He referred to the new kingdom He was then founding in the world; and He meant as the event proved, that it was going to be very hard for people who were well to do to give all that up for the obloquy and persecution, and probable confiscation, which would come on the early professors of the Christian Faith.

But that state of things has changed. No rich man, to become a very earnest and true Christian, is obliged to throw away his riches, or to change one item of his well-ordered and comfortable life. I know very many rich men of the most simple and unostentatious characters and lives; and I know many poor men who are proud and selfish, and a great deal more difficult than any rich. The fact is that a certain style of living, luxurious living, if you please, not meaning by that, riotous or improper living, seems to me to be a matter of education and environment and custom, and by itself to have very little to do with a man's truth and genuineness, and devotion to religious duty. A man used to great "style" scarcely notices it. It does not awaken in him a sense of pride and superiority. It is just a part of his daily life, especially if he has been born to it. I do not include in this a vulgar display of wealth for wealth's sake; silver menu cards, peaches at a dollar apiece, and wines of enormous cost. This is demoralizing indeed, but rich men do not in general perpetrate such follies. On the other hand, the not being able to have soup every day, and having no servant, by no means implies any less crossness, or unselfishness, or humility. The most thorough worldliness co-exists with the greatest poverty, and the most thorough unworldliness with the greatest riches. One's station often obliges one to incur certain great expenses of living, dress, table, furniture, etc., but the heart is not of necessity bound up in these things. That is

all I care to establish ; that riches, of necessity, do not make you selfish, arrogant, pleasure-loving, luxurious and forgetful of God.

Riches have their great dangers, but so has poverty ; and as I said, these dangers are pretty evenly balanced. Let me try to show this, first, about the besetting sins of riches :

I. They blast the sense of dependence upon God, which is such a sweet relation. When you can order and obtain anything you want from anywhere, it is very apt to make you forget that everything we have comes from the hands of God ; that He gives us all things richly to enjoy ; and there springs up in the unwatched heart a feeling that God is not necessary to you, that you can take care of yourself.

II. The bootlicking which is done to rich men, even by the vestries of the churches where they take pews, is very apt to give them airs, to puff them up with ideas of their great importance. They become dictatorial, tyrannical and impatient, at not having their own way.

III. A common effect of riches is selfishness. Wrapped in your own comfort, you forget the discomfort of others ; and in the charmed life you are able to lead, you lose touch with all those millions of lives which are not charmed, and which a little help from you would so greatly brighten.

IV. The being able to gratify every desire stimulates wrong desires, and rich people often succumb to their very great opportunities, in themselves an enormous temptation.

To sum up: The besetting sins of the rich are pride, self-sufficiency, self-importance, luxury, selfish indifference to the wretchedness and poverty in the world, easy gratification of every desire. All rich men are not beset by all these, nor do they of necessity fall victims to any.

Now, what are the besetting sins of the poor?

I. Disbelief in God. They get to think because there is such inequality in worldly fortune, that there is no superintending Providence; that religion, and priests, and churches, are just inventions of the rich to keep quiet the poor, and this world is the portion of the fortunate.

II. Enviousness of and anger with those better off than they are. Poor people often seem to think some sort of injustice is done them by those who from one cause or other are able to live better and more comfortably. They foolishly think rich people hate and despise them, and they foolishly return that hate.

III. A proud and very disagreeable thing called "independence." I have always found the self-importance of some journeyman a great deal more intolerable than the pride of the rich, because very bad manners generally go with it.

IV. Selfishness in regarding only your own class interests, and saying since you have to look out for number one, you will consider no other number.

V. The common temptation, besetting rich and poor, to yield to desire, more dangerous often in

the poor, because coarser and untempered by refinement.

These, then, are the besetting sins of the poor: Envy, covetousness, disbelief in God and the Church, pride, selfishness, coarse desire.

I do not see much to choose between the two catalogues. The fact is that every station in life has its trials, and they do not vary much in power. Each and every one, rich or poor, must find out and watch these trials of his station, fight against them, and use God and His Church to help fight, and spend no time in thinking: "Oh, if I were only somebody else and in some other rank, I could do much better."

ESPRIT DE CORPS.

LET us talk a little about *Esprit de corps*. I wish I could use an English word for it, since I think it very bad taste to mix either your speech or your writing with foreign words; but there is no exact English equivalent. The meaning we all know. It is being devoted to any organization to which you belong, the honor of every one of its members being your honor, the adversity or prosperity of the body being part of your adversity and prosperity. The phrase belonged originally to military life; and referred to that devotion which a soldier is expected to feel for his regiment, for his company, for his captain, for his flag. It was, and is, thought a soldier's duty to stand up for his comrades under all circumstances, whether wise or unwise, whether involving gain or loss for himself; nay, he is expected to face danger and death rather than desert the corps of which he is a member, or leave one of his fellows in the lurch. I know well that this duty has often been carried to excess. Officers who had no personal cause of quarrel have felt bound, when the honor of a comrade or the

fair fame of the regiment was attacked, to challenge the assailant, fight a bloody duel, and often lose their lives. I do not uphold this, but I cannot help admiring it.

I want, now, to apply the spirit of the phrase to our life and our surroundings. Have we *esprit de corps*? Do we cultivate it as we should? Does it make any difference to us what others say of men, and bodies of men, with which we either voluntarily or involuntarily are associated? For example: You are an American, and by that I do not mean an American in the foreign sense; for on the continent of Europe, Venezuelans, Brazilians, and Mexicans are all Americans; but I mean a child of the United States. Now, do you form one of that degenerate crowd who spend their breath in decrying their own country, running down its institutions, drawing comparisons to its discredit with English, French, or even Italian, ways? There are such people. I have met them here and abroad, and they are as irritating to me as red peppers. I do not ask whether you play a good hand in the great game of "brag," with which all Americans are said to be so familiar; but I ask whether you always stand ready to break a lance for the honor of your country, and believe her to be the noblest and grandest country in the world? She has faults. There are spots on the sun. But do you cover them up, or do you exaggerate and publish them?

There are other things, however, beside country which call for *esprit de corps*. You belong to an

order. You are a carpenter, or a merchant, or a farmer, or a priest. I will take a priest, as illustration, and I do it because for almost all other orders there are "unions" and so much *esprit de corps*, that thousands of men will lay down their tools and walk out of their shops if the most insignificant and most worthless of their union, or whatever it may be called, is suffering anything they consider to be unjust. We may blame the extremes to which this is carried, but we cannot help admiring the self-sacrifice it often entails.

Now, there are no "unions" for priests, and very little *esprit de corps*. Do not imagine that I want such unions, or advocate priests going on strike, and all the other priests refusing to do anything till the brother on whom they thought the Bishop or the vestry were jumping, got his rights. That would not only be absurd, but wicked; but I do advocate a strong class and caste feeling among those who are in Holy Orders, that they should stand by each other, defend each other, hide each other's weaknesses; and only when strong duty commands it, bring to the bar of justice their erring brethren. The Emperor Constantine, at the Council of Nice, said: "If I should see a Bishop committing mortal sin, I would not cry out. I would hide him in the folds of my purple." This, of course, was Oriental hyperbole, but I wish that we priests had something of the same feeling; that we felt more deeply our "Order," and that the *corps* feeling was more evident in the ranks than it is. It does not seem to me that I could, unless forced by

the sternest sense of duty, ever become the persecutor of one of my brother priests. This feeling may appear blamable, but I think will meet with the approval of every manly heart. There are enough people to find fault with us, to misunderstand our motives, to belittle our calling, to pick out our flaws, to twist our mistakes into formidable offenses. Let us stand by each other, protect each other, and keep up a weak brother as long as we can do so without dishonor to our priestly vows.

But not only priests need to think of "*esprit de corps*," but laymen. What is your Church to you, my lay friends? Is it like the precinct where you live, something whose common honor does not lie very near your heart; or is it what you sing it is in hymns, and spout it is at Church Club banquets—your mother? If the Church be your mother, then ought not a mother's honor, a mother's fair fame, to be the very dearest thing you know? Ought you not to respect that mother's commands, even if they do not always chime in with your views?

Let our Church be for us not simply a moral club, not simply a conventionality, but something for which we are willing to peril our ease, our fortunes, and, if need be, our lives.

A MAN THE HEAD OF HIS HOUSE.

ONCE upon a time, centuries on centuries ago, an old man stood up before a large assemblage of people, and, after a speech full of earnest words, used this sentence: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Now, remember, a man said this in his capacity as head of his house. "Nothing strange in that," you say. "Is not a man always the head of his house?" Well, it used to be thought so, and it is good Bible doctrine that it is so; but you must confess that our talking sisters seem to teach that it is only so with very great qualifications, and to think it so is a good deal of a superstition. Now, the newspapers seem to think this is very funny; and they have added to their stock subjects for jokes, such as the summer vacations of the clergy, and the young men who stay late courting, this one of the "new woman."

To me, however, the situation seems very serious. I read in my Bible such words as these: "I suffer not the woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve."

"The head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man."

"The man is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man."

"For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man."

These are hard nuts to crack. No wonder so many women nowadays say they are rotten nuts, and not worth the cracking. But, my friends, they are good, sound nuts, and the meat in them amounts to this: that it is a God appointed thing that a man should be the head of the house, in the State, in the Church, in the society, in the home.

But let us leave the general question. "My house" certainly means "my family." Let us stick close to that. Because a man is the head it does not follow as a matter of course that he is always a good head. Often he is a totally unworthy one, and then how the family suffers. It is just like a sick physical head. When that comes about, the hands grasp only feebly, the feet seem loaded with a ball and chain, the nerves jar and jangle like some ruined harp. In such cases what a blessing it is if the wife can step in and take the headship, and save the family from ruin. To recognize a headship does not imply, as these preaching females teach, a cringing servitude, or a servile obedience. I recognize the President of the United States as my civil head, and the Bishop of Chicago as my ecclesiastical head; and I "order myself lowly and reverently to them, as my betters," but I do not cringe to them, or give up my rights to them, or

submit tamely to tyranny on their part. Nor should the wife to the one who miserably performs his duty as the head. No husband can compel a wife to do wrong. He may see fit to laugh at God and all holy things; he cannot force her to do so. He is bound to respect all her rights of conscience, and her duty to her children and her obligations to the society in which she lives. She certainly has reserved rights which she does not give up in marriage. But all this does not impugn the statements of the Bible that the man is the head of the house.

And now, my man, what sort of a head are you? What sort of a head is he who spends his leisure time in carousing, in running after strange women, in playing the pot-house politician? What sort of a head is he who, never at home, becomes a sort of myth to his children, who hear of their father, but never see him? What sort of a head is he whom every one in the house must feel is a selfish, grasping creature; who thinks everything in the house is for him and his comfort alone? The children must not make a noise, and no one must have any particular enjoyment if it interferes with his ideas or whims. Oh, the mockeries of heads these are, and yet such awful consequences hang upon the good or bad direction of families.

Charles Dudley Warner, in his charming articles on Chicago, speaking of the homes, says: "A stranger will be surprised to find in a city so new so many homes pervaded by the atmosphere of books, and art, and refined sensibility. There is so much here that is in exquisite taste that one has a

hopeful heart about the future." This is very pretty and very true, and, above all, very tickling to the Chicago palate; but are the heads of these homes inscribing over them: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"? Are you, O head, in your representative character, doing that, or does "me," in your case, mean your wife? It is all right that she should do it, but you—you can go on shirking your religious obligations; you can remain deaf to the voice of the Church; you can be blind to private prayer and public profession—all these you can get on without. "Am I not a good head?" you say. "I provide well for my family's needs. I personally attend to their education. I set them an example of clean living and honest dealing. Is not that serving the Lord?" Yes, it is, but it is only a half service. How about family prayer? How about being at the head of the seat on Sundays? How about going up to the altar? How about a life avowed to be after the pattern of the Gospel?

Nothing is going to save this land from moral wreck but the heads of houses standing up and saying: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

THE FAILURES OF INFIDELITY.

IN the May *Forum*, 1896, the ratio of increase of communicants with that of the population of the country is compared, and the advantage is found to be very greatly with the churches. The percentage of increase in population for the decade ending in 1890, was 24.86. The increase for the past five years has not been as great, but we will assume that it has been, and put it at 12.43. But the growth of the churches since 1890 has been at the rate of 20 per cent. It is clear that the churches are gaining on the population rapidly and steadily.

Items like these from a paper certainly with no great prepossessions in favor of Orthodox Christianity, must make the infidels and the agnostics, and the Ingersollites and the new women, and Gebal and Aminon and Amalek, very mad indeed. They are continually blowing trumpets to call the world to see Christianity squelched; and then when the world comes, they are forced to cry, like the Pharisees, "Behold, the world is gone after Him." It is really pitiable to see people try so

hard to sweep the ocean out with a broom, and make so little headway. I often wonder how, in the face of the Christian Church, they have the courage to persevere. Her history, the knowledge of the way along which she has come, her trials, - her oppositions, and her present flourishing state, it seems to me, must force any sensible man to say, "There is something that is not of the earth in this thing, or else it would have perished with the thousand empires, dynasties, systems, and schemes which have risen above the horizon, shone for a while, and then gone out forever." Its worst foes always have been, and are now, inside of it, among Christians themselves; but that does not prevent its multiplying like the sands of the sea.

Consider the state of things now. Some of the most gifted men in the world are trying hard to talk Christianity down. Books are published every month which prove as clear as daylight that it is all a delusion; great governments, like that of France, do all they can to lessen its influence; scientific men show in eloquent lectures that there cannot even be a God, let alone a Saviour. Reverend gentlemen prove the Bible to be full of faults and contradictions and inconsistencies, and our dear Lord to be only a highly gifted man; and yet here is the Christian Church, not a senile, palsied, trembling old hag, but a young, beautiful boy, whose healthy blood heals in a month or two the deepest wounds, and who stands erect, laughing at his foes.

I pity you, you whose noses are turned up at Christianity. I really pity you; for as you look at

the numberless churches everywhere going up, the ever-increasing flock of missionaries, the splendid army of young men serving under the banner of Christ, the enormous sums everywhere given for enterprises under the invocation of Christ, it must be such a disappointment, it must convey such a bitter sense of failure, it must seem such a maddening incomprehensibility, to find that Christianity will not be killed; that although you have shown a thousand times how foolish it is, how narrowing, how unreasonable, that sensible men certainly must give it up, they will not do it, they will stick to it, they will get baptized, will take Christ for their Master, will say they are sinners, will go to the Cross for forgiveness.

Why don't you infidel people show us something better than Christianity? We are not fools, we do not usually throw away good things when we see them. Show us a better religion (for a religion of some kind man must have, you do not need to be told that) than this old Bible religion, set forth in the Creed, taught in the Sacraments, shown in the Church, and we will surely adopt it. This is a free country, we are not forced to be Christians to get a place in society, or to succeed in business. I grant it used to be so, and I grant that many people just said they were Christians for such purposes; but you fellows have done this much good, you have knocked that plaster image to pieces; and any one can be perfectly respectable and, if rich, receive all possible honor, without the slightest affectation of Christianity. It is not un-

common now to hear boys just out of knickerbockers declare themselves agnostics; and if that word be synonymous with ignoramuses, they well describe themselves. We can then all profess your opinions without doing our worldly state any harm, but why don't we? Answer that! But you know you cannot, and it must make you very angry. Why don't you give up and go into more profitable business?

God knows our presentation of Christianity is often poor enough, and distorted enough, and mean enough, when compared with our great Founder's teaching and example; but such as it is, it grips men as all your salves and lotions, and porous plasters and anodynes fail to do. How you must chafe under this, and ask each other when you meet, "Why do we not make more headway against this wretched Christianity?" I will tell you why: "Because it is from God, and neither you, nor I, nor all the world, can put it down."

INSPIRATION.

MOST people connect "inspiration" only with the Apostles and patriarchs and prophets; but we make a great mistake by cherishing any such narrow view as that, just because our grandfathers held it, or our old rector used to preach it, when we were children. Inspiration has a far nobler meaning than that. The breath of God has been breathed out more fully than that. The wind of God has blown further and wider than within those limits. We too often connect God only with religion and religious things; and we forget to connect Him with the painting of pictures, the evolution of steam engines, the logic and argument of philosophies. We have forgotten that every good thing comes from God, whether religious or secular; that no wild savage could think a good thought unless the Spirit of God was breathed into him; that every thing that is not purely animal, everything that belongs to man as distinguished from brutes, is by inspiration of God, is just the everlasting breathing of Him who breathed the first spiritual breath into the first lump of clay,

whatever form it had, and whatever instincts it already possessed; of Him who breathed, long after that, on the Apostles.

So, when the first man had the idea of a better knife, or a better spear, it was by inspiration of God. When he first began to speak some rude verse, or strike some poor harp—a string across a turtle shell, two sticks of wood beaten in harmony,—it was an inspiration. When he first stooped down by a fallen foe, and gave him water, or bound up his wounds, it was an inspiration. The first love that was not lust was an inspiration. Every invention, every poem, every act of generosity, or unselfishness, everything that animals cannot do, is by the inspiration of God. Our natural breath we have as the brutes have; but our breath of mind, of soul, of spirit, is our special breathing upon by the Holy Ghost. We use this word “inspiration”—and very rightly—for any extraordinary work. When an orator says something very brilliant and uplifting, we say, “He seems inspired.” When a very wonderful invention is given to man, we cry out, “What an inspiration.” We say of a great singer, “She was most inspiring.” And above all, of some books which have been written, we say: “The writers appeared to have been inspired—to have had their eyes and their ears opened as no other men ever had; to have had their souls illumined as ordinary men never experienced.”

Now, the inspiration of the Bible is something of the same kind, only in an immeasurably greater

degree. Above all other books that ever were written, these books bear the traces of the breathing of God, because, better and greater than all other books, they teach us how to live aright, how to think of God, how to understand the world; above all, they reveal to us the character of Jesus Christ, the Ideal of humanity, the Incarnation of God. I do not say no other book ever was inspired. We are right when we speak of the inspiration of Shakespeare and Dante. But I do say that far above all other books is the Bible the breath of God; and it, separate from all other books, can be called the Word of God.

No matter about the scientific mistakes of the Bible, and they are many; or the historical contradictions, and they are not a few; or the confused numbers, or the difficulties of authorship, or the whole business of what is called the "Higher Criticism;" they do not invalidate the glorious inspiration of the Bible any more than Dante's absurd notions about astronomy, or Shakespeare's making Bohemia a country with a sea coast, invalidate their inspiration. The Bible has been inspired by God to teach me how to live and whom to follow, and how to get near Him. What matter about its opinions about other things? Concerning those awful things it is my best, my only guide, and for these I cling to it as God's best gift to me. Inspiration, remember, belongs to you, no matter how dull you may be, just as to the greatest genius in the world; and just as the amount of fresh air in a house will depend on the doors and

windows cut in, or whether it is planted in a canyon, or set on a hill, so the amount of inspiration you will get will depend on your capacity to receive; and if you have only a limited capacity, whether you try to give it a chance.

The wind of God is always blowing. The Holy Spirit is always breathing, but it cannot get into shut-up places, barred and bolted to keep all air out. Is your life like that? People, to get air, go where air is. Are you going where you are sure to find the wind of the Spirit? It blows in the Church, it blows in the Sacraments, it stirs and freshens every ordinance and ritual arrangement. Do you put yourself in the way of it? "But I cannot see it," you say. Well, you cannot even see the wind that stirs your hair. Who can see heat, who can see the force behind all other forces, for which men of science are groping? They know it, but no one can see it. You can feel it, if you open your heart and let it in.

Call on the wind of God to come and blow away your prejudices, your objections, your arguings. Ask it to melt the ice around your heart. Come, wind of the Spirit, come, "inspiration of God," and blow away our evil tempers, our lust, our sloth, our pride. Sweep the floor clean, and make room for Christ and for better things.

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